

THOMAS HOBBS
OF BRITAIN

L. J. EDMOND, M.A.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation





Thomas Ruddle.

THOMAS RUDDLE OF SHEBBEAR.

A NORTH DEVON ARNOLD.

**His Life and Selections from
his Letters**

**To The Right Honourable Sir SAMUEL JAMES WAY, Bart.,
Chief Justice of South Australia, Chancellor of the University
of Adelaide, etc. ; Rev. JOHN THORNE, of Adelaide, S.A. ;
Col. Sir ROBERT WHITE-THOMSON, K.C.B., of Exbourne,
North Devon ; and others.**

BY

"AN OLD SHEBBEAR BOY"
(G. P. DYMOND, M.A.).

LONDON :
HENRY HOOKS,
12 FARRINGDON AVENUE, E.C.,

The Farringdon Library.

EDITED BY REV. HENRY SMITH.

To all

"OLD SHEBBEAR BOYS"

throughout the World

THIS MEMORIAL

of their

GREAT HEAD MASTER AND TRUSTY FRIEND

is affectionately inscribed

BY ONE OF THEIR NUMBER.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Preface	7
CHAPTER I.	
Introductory -	9
CHAPTER II.	
Thomas Ruddle's Younger Days: By his Brother	21
CHAPTER III.	
First Period at Shebbear, 1864—1874. Early Experiences	31
CHAPTER IV.	
Second Period : 1874—1882. Extension -	45
CHAPTER V.	
Third Period : 1882—1892. Further Development	56
CHAPTER VI.	
Fourth Period : 1892—1909. Continued Success and Closing Days -	75
CHAPTER VII.	
Tributes from Various Sources	93
CHAPTER VIII.	
Margaret Ruddle -	109
CHAPTER IX.	
"Tommy," as His Boys Saw Him -	121
CHAPTER X.	
"T. R." and His Assistant Masters -	137
CHAPTER XI.	
As Teacher and Friend of Boys and Men -	151
CHAPTER XII.	
Letters to Sir Samuel Way -	171
CHAPTER XIII.	
Letters to Rev. John Thorne -	187

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	FACING PAGE
Thomas Ruddle - - - <i>Frontispiece</i>	
Rev. James Thorne - - - - -	21
Shebbear College, Front View - - -	45
Thomas Ruddle in his Earlier Years at Shebbear	75
Margaret Ruddle - - - - -	109
Thomas Ruddle in Later Years - - -	151
The Rt. Hon. Sir Samuel James Way, Bart., Chief Justice of South Australia - - -	171
Rev. John Thorne, of Adelaide, South Australia -	187

PREFACE.

THOMAS RUDDLE left no autobiography. On the contrary, he seems to have been at some pains to destroy such records and correspondence relating to himself as might have been of service in narrating the story of his life. Fortunately, however, many of his letters have been preserved by the two friends on the other side of the globe to whom he probably wrote at greatest length and with greatest freedom during his long career at Shebbear. Sir Samuel James Way, Chief Justice of South Australia, has kindly lent a considerable number of these, and the Rev. John Thorne, of Adelaide, son of the Rev. James Thorne, and Mr. Ruddle's oldest friend at Shebbear, an even greater number. Much of the information thus obtained has been interwoven with this narrative. Some portions of the letters are given at the end of this volume and together with one to Sir Robert White-Thomson and a few to his Old Boys will, no doubt, constitute the most interesting and valuable portion of the book. For the rest, the chief aim of the writer has been to present in as many lights as so brief a narrative will permit, the portrait of a man whose influence over the lives of those who came in contact with him was very remarkable. The fact that he spent nearly fourteen years at Shebbear and subsequently enjoyed more than twenty years' close friendship with

PREFACE

Mr. Ruddle, must have given rise to the suggestion that the writer should undertake so responsible a task as that attempted in this volume. It has, however, been a veritable labour of love, though performed amid the distraction of many duties.

Limitations of space have forbidden the inclusion of quotations from Mr. Ruddle's numerous articles which lie scattered throughout the pages of various magazines. They have been collected, however, and if any desire for their publication should manifest itself, a second volume will be forthcoming. Such is the freshness and vigour of these articles that, as they are read to-day, they not only rekindle the old fervour and glow of bygone days, but are singularly apposite to present-day needs and thought. The story of the man can never be regarded as complete until the working of his mind upon literary, social, educational, and theological subjects has been unfolded.

In the meantime the best thanks of the writer are due to the many friends—some of whom are mentioned in the book—who have assisted him in this attempt to give some greater permanence to the memory of one whom they all so highly esteemed.

ERRATA.

Page 25, line 23, for "eleven" read "ten"; and at line 24, same page, for "Two" read "Three."

I.

INTRODUCTORY.

TRAINING AND IDEALS.

THE reader of the late Sir Joshua Fitch's "Lectures on Teaching" will have little difficulty in recognising some features of that eminent educationist in the portrait here attempted of one of his intellectual—*not to say spiritual*—sons. Thomas Ruddle sat at his feet at Borough Road Training College not long before its Principal became a Government Inspector of Schools and began, as a Commissioner under the Endowed Schools Act, his enquiries into the working of such Schools. These investigations led in many instances to their complete transformation and pointed the way to the subsequent development of higher education in England.

The lectures he delivered at Cambridge during the year 1880, after the lamented R. H. Quick had given his famous series on the "History of Education," show clearly how powerful was the impress of Fitch in moulding the character and affecting the aims of his less-known disciple. It was the writer's good fortune on one occasion to meet Sir Joshua Fitch and in the course of a brief conversation to bring Mr. Ruddle back to his recollection, as he had not heard of him for many years. The memory of that interview leaves, as the outstanding feature of resemblance between them, that hiding of power about which Mr. Ruddle speaks in some of his letters.

In looking back upon the work of Thomas Ruddle it is easy to recognize how much he assimilated of the instruction of his great

TRAINING AND IDEALS

master. Fitch's words seem to be Mr. Ruddle's as we read them in the Lectures, and we can hear the tones of his voice as he gives utterance to them: "The best part of a teacher's equipment is incommunicable in the form of pedagogic lectures. . . . Some of the most important qualifications of the office—as zeal, faithfulness, self-consecration and personal fitness—will escape analysis and defy the power to test them." It was just these qualities which made Thomas Ruddle the force that he became in moulding the characters of men. Again, when the Cambridge lecturer tells us that freshness and vigour, variety and versatility are "of the very essence of successful teaching" the same vigorous personality comes at once to mind, for Mr. Ruddle was the very embodiment of these characteristics, as he was also of the great principle that "in the long run nothing can influence character like character." "You teach," says Fitch, "not only by what you say and do, but very largely by what you are."

By continued reading Mr. Ruddle became what Bacon calls "a full man," and here again he was in the true line of succession to the greatest teachers: "A true teacher never thinks his education complete, but is always seeking to add to his knowledge." He was a real disciple of Roger Ascham, whose ideal student is "one who hath a lust to labour and is always desirous to search out any doubt, not ashamed to learn of the meanest, nor afraid to go to the greatest, until he be perfectly taught and fully satisfied." This was precisely the attitude of Thomas Ruddle, and it explains in part why he was so revered by all, even the humblest

TRAINING AND IDEALS

peasants about him. They knew him to be a great and a learned man, yet he let them feel that there was something that even they could teach him and he was an apt scholar in the hands of the crudest teacher. His simple-minded gardener took pride in instructing him, till he became more expert than his tutor, who was none the less proud of him. Nor was he afraid to go to the greatest. If, as Fitch says of the schoolmaster in general, he had to spend much of his time in school with his intellectual inferiors, he was faithful to the precept of his chief and took care that out of school he should spend his time as much as possible with his intellectual superiors. Shakespeare and Milton, Tennyson and Browning, Carlyle and Ruskin were to him as personal friends; but they only represent a fragment of his reading. He loved them sufficiently to contradict them here and there, for his was no servile literary homage, but the reverence of one who has stopped to think. He had Frederic Harrison's admiration for Ruskin as a master of English prose, but like that philosophical critic he would "prefer to dwell in thought on the infinite stimulus to a pure judgement of nature and of life" which Ruskin has given us.

Carlyle and John Stuart Mill probably exerted the most potent influence over him in his earlier years at Shebbear. "We have lost a great teacher and example of knowledge and virtue," said John Morley at the time of Mill's death, and it was as such a teacher that Thomas Ruddle regarded him. This regard was at first almost passionate, as his brother has related. "Your enthusiasm for Wesley," he once told

TRAINING AND IDEALS

Mr. James Thorne, "exceeds all bounds. I don't know whether it is really right to worship a man as you worship Wesley." "I certainly reverence John Wesley very greatly," was the old man's reply, "almost, though not quite as much, as you do John Stuart Mill." In later years, however, with Frederic Harrison, Mr. Ruddle could say of Mill, "to the diminishing band of those who knew him, it will be his nobility of nature which dwells deepest in their memory rather than his sagacity of mind." Like Mill's, the life of Thomas Ruddle was one of "indefatigable industry, conscientious effort and beautiful ideals," and he shared the same "sympathetic trust in humanity."

Carlyle at one time had an almost baneful influence upon Mr. Ruddle, for all the exaggerated emphasis of "Sartor Resartus" laid a strong hold upon one who shared Carlyle's contempt for the superficialities and insincerities of mankind. Happily, mellowing influences were at work, with the result that Mr. Ruddle's misanthropic tendencies were greatly modified. But throughout his life the spell of Carlyle was upon him and he was a sturdy believer in the gospel of "hero-worship, veracity, and hard work."

In his later years Robert Browning did much to deliver Mr. Ruddle from the pessimistic view of life which may have been fostered in him by Carlyle. His love of Browning grew stronger with the passing years, and no lectures or articles of his have been more eagerly heard and read than those on this poet. Of Browning he says: "His power of analysing the motives and impulses of the human soul is

TRAINING AND IDEALS

such as can be found in no other English writer except Shakespeare." He has an acute perception of Browning's power: "As he has exhausted the powers and passions of the human soul, from rollicking mirth to awful tragedy, and from the whirlwind and the fire to the still, small voice, so also has he exhausted the possibilities of English rhythm." He notes "what Goethe said of Shakespeare and what Carlyle applied to Goethe" and says the same of Browning: "His characters are like watches with dial-plates of transparent crystal; they show you the hour like others, and the inward mechanism also is all visible." But the greatest appeal of Browning came to Thomas Ruddle through his "tenderness and chivalry," his "splendid optimism, his unfaltering faith in God, and in the final triumph of Truth and Righteousness."

As almost a last message he—who was himself mighty in the Scriptures and in loyalty to Christ—leaves us this eulogy of the great poet in words of truest catholicity, which might well be applied to himself:

"In this age of doubt and unrest it is reassuring that the greatest poet-seer of the century was as profoundly religious as John Henry Newman or Frederick Denison Maurice. How sublime the faith and courage of the man who could look death full in the face, neither hoping nor praying for that painless euthanasia that Charles Wesley [and Matthew Arnold] so earnestly wished for!

"I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!"

His closing letters reveal Thomas Ruddle facing the end in the same brave spirit, thinking

TRAINING AND IDEALS

in his latest hours of the wife of his choice, whose companionship he had lost for seventeen years ; with child-like faith anticipating the reunion in the words with which Browning had consoled himself under similar loss :

“O thou soul of my soul ! I shall clasp thee
again,
And with God be the rest.”

Mr. Ruddle's views on education are nowhere better expressed than in his great tribute to the memory of Rev. James Thorne at the Centenary Conference in 1895. The nobility of such an utterance reveals the man at a time when he was under the full sway of the emotions which were ever associated with the name of one who had undoubtedly been the greatest spiritual force in the shaping of his own character :

“Education, after she has formed the manners, and if she has rightly succeeded in her work, the manners of the nobly-born, proceeds to teach men how to use their eyes, and ears, and hands, and how to form correct and rapid judgements of the affairs with which they have to do—to distinguish at once and decisively between the evil and the good, the beautiful and the ugly, the impure and the holy—in short, to give men the aptitudes and instincts of the scholar—of the well-cultured, the educated man. Here let me protest against the absurd depreciation of instruction as distinguished from education. Instruction teaches men and boys facts unknown to them before, trains the fingers to acquire a dexterity they could never acquire of themselves, and the use of such tools and implements as the wisdom of many ages has bequeathed to the sons of men. Education

TRAINING AND IDEALS

draws out of men by whatever process of discipline is necessary, all the powers of body and mind and soul that are in them.

“Neither is complete without the other ; neither can by any means be compelled to do the work of both ; and he who exalts the one and disparages the other, insults both. ‘Take fast hold of instruction,’ said the best-educated man of his age, ‘let her not go, keep her, for she is thy life.’ And this man, who was also the best-instructed of his time and nation, says also, ‘Get wisdom, get understanding, forget it not.’ When in this way instruction and education have done their work, and done it well, then, indeed, we have learnt the path of wisdom, and shall find for ourselves that ‘Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.’ It is instruction that teaches men the aptitudes of a scholar. ‘A man,’ said Socrates, ‘is only wise in that which he can do well ; and he who has been so taught (instructed) and trained (educated) that he can do supremely well the duties of his every-day life is emphatically the educated or cultured man.’ ‘The business of education,’ said the late Mr. Huxley, ‘is to train the eye, the ear, the hand, and all the organs of sense and motion, to do easily and well whatever they are capable of doing.’ The misfortune is that those who have eyes see not, those who have ears hear not, neither do they understand.

“But education ought to awaken the instincts as well as the aptitudes of the scholar ; teach us to decide swiftly and accurately between good and evil, sweet and bitter, and the beautiful and the ugly. It should form our judgements and govern our tastes. It should teach us not only to know, but to reverence

TRAINING AND IDEALS

knowledge ; not only to be just in our dealings, but to hunger and thirst after righteousness ; not only to recognise, but to love whatever is beautiful and true. Few men could be more utterly unlike than James Thorne and John Ruskin, whether in natural temperament or in training, or in aim, or in life. So entirely different was their way of viewing things, and of deciding questions of right and duty, that it is certain that each of them would have misjudged and unjustly disparaged the other. Yet the teaching of their lives is practically the same. They both insist that our first and most imperative duty is undeviating integrity. We must do justly. Then we must be tender and piteous to the wretched and fallen, must grieve where others grieve, and must delight in labour for the sake of others ; we must love mercy. Lastly, conscious of many a failure and many a sin, feeling always the need of guidance and protection stronger than ourselves, we must walk humbly with our God. Such, I conceive, was James Thorne's conception of what education ought to be. Cheerfully obedient to the call of duty he laboured more abundantly than we all, instant in season and out of season, with a courage as indomitable as his zeal was untiring. Hard pressed by financial difficulties, without help and almost without sympathy, he and his brother started a school, set up a printing press, published a somewhat bulky 'History of the Church and Court of Rome,' and a series of small religious and educational works; and then resolutely set themselves the Herculean task of kindling a love of reading and a reverence for knowledge among a people not only quite uneducated, but strongly prejudiced against education."

TRAINING AND IDEALS

Such a man was Thomas Ruddle, whose life-work made him not only the guide and counsellor of his boys but the friend of men of affairs, of known culture and wide influence like Sir Samuel Way, Sir Robert White-Thomson and the late Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, as well as of a host of others who learnt to respect him for his work's sake and with one consent to regard him as—

THE ARNOLD OF SHEBBEAR.





Rev. James Thorne.

II.

**THOMAS RUDDLE'S
YOUNGER DAYS.**

**BY HIS BROTHER, REV. JAMES RUDDLE,
OF NEWPORT, I.W.**



I REPORTED once to my elder brother my amusement at reading an article of his on Shebbear in the "Bible Christian Magazine."

In many another man's hands such an article would have been not a disguised but just a half-clothed advertisement. But, so bent was he on stating the most rugged facts as they were, that he described Shebbear as a "squalid village," and mentioned that it had a "sub-soil of cold clay." Whether he would have approved of my using up time and paper to tell anything at all about his early life is very doubtful. But in any case he would wish that, if I did, I should describe the sub-soil honestly, and make no absurd attempt to disguise that smell of oil and wool which every stranger used to detect in the atmosphere of Trowbridge.

It was in Trowbridge, Wilts., on November 15th, 1839, that Thomas Ruddle first saw the light of this world. All the anecdotes I have ever heard of his infancy make me believe that he took life very cheerfully; learned to talk some considerable time before the first year of his apprenticeship had ended, and began from that time to say and do. But it was not a very delightful world he had come to live in. Thomas Ruddle, sen., was a working man; a spinner of woollen yarn, and, moreover, a queer sort of man to have for a father. My father's birth certificate stated that he was born in Melksham in the year 1815. But the removal to Trowbridge must have taken place shortly after. In any case, at eight years of age my father entered one of the factories and began his work as a "roller-

joiner" (at a process which now for many years past has been done by machinery); and in one or other of the factories he continued to work till he was past seventy. For the greater portion of his adult life he worked for Messrs. Brown and Palmer; but a factory worker in those days could look forward to no pension from his employers, and no old-age pension from the Government.

My father's lot was anything but fortunate. In those days the children of poor people were driven off to the factories while they were yet but babies; they were compelled to work cruelly long days, they were often underfed and subject to stupid and brutal punishment. In this case the child was motherless, and the father (my grandfather) harsh and neglectful. Thus it happened that the father of the man who was teacher, friend, and guide to so many generations of boys at Shebbear never received any schooling, and never in his young days knew the comfort of a home. The hardships of his father's early life in those unreformed and cruel times was a subject often in my brother's mind, and one of his very latest essays (unpublished) is coloured throughout by his sympathetic imagination of what his father had endured. Yet the youngster thus ill-treated came through the days of boyhood without substantial injury to his physical, whatever wrong may have been done to his moral, nature. In the year 1838 the Thomas Ruddle who married Eliza Hillman was a strong, good-looking young fellow, well dressed on Sundays and holiday times, five feet nine inches in height, an eager reader, a ready speaker, in many ways a promising young man.

My brother's estimate of his father's intellectual qualities was always very high. Certainly, considering his ill bringing-up it was surprising how much he knew of English literature; while his knowledge of the English Bible, like Mr. Weller's knowledge of London, was extensive and peculiar. "I believe," said my brother to me one day, in a tone which he used when he wanted to convey a lesson without obtruding it, "I believe that we, none of us, have rated father's *spiritual insight* as highly as it deserves." "It was his own fault if we did not," I replied. Truth is that in some things that promising young man did not exactly fulfil his promise. He was doomed to a life of hard and unsuitable toil, in which his best faculties had no opportunity for exercise; his temper was always capricious, his conduct sometimes harsh. Peace to his ashes. There is much allowance to be made for an unschooled factory worker, whose struggle with poverty was continuous from day to day and from year to year.

My brother was the eldest of ~~eleven~~ children. ~~Two~~ died in infancy, but that left a numerous family still to be provided for. My mother's health was not very good, but she was not given to complaint, and, indeed, if the best had been made of her, she was as good a woman as God ever gave to be the helper and companion of man. I have often admired how, when her family had grown up and her own life became a little easier and more leisurely, her mind broadened out; with what new zest she took to reading, and how even on her death-bed she enjoyed the writings of Theodore Parker, and chortled when she came to an expression she thought particularly good.

THOMAS RUDDLE'S YOUNGER DAYS

A thorough optimist was my mother after all she had endured. She met death with the utmost fortitude; she believed in God and felt no fear; and I remember with a sort of pride the tone of scornful rejection with which she repelled the doctor's suggestion that it might lengthen her life some days if she would consent to be fed through a tube. If his intellectual powers were more especially inherited from his father, Thomas Ruddle surely owed to his mother some of his practical good sense, and something of the toughness of his moral fibre.

A good thing happened to him when, in his fifteenth year, my brother was invited by his "Grandfather Hillman" to come and live with him. The invitation was accepted. My brother, away from the noise of the younger children, was able to devote more time to study, and a certain sense of freedom made him soon to become a healthier, happier lad. After a twelvemonth's experience in the office of Messrs. Brown and Palmer, at the age of sixteen years, he became apprenticed as a pupil teacher at the Trowbridge British School. He was allowed to slip one year of the usual five years' service, by taking the third year's examination at the end of the second year, so that he worked as pupil teacher for four years. Those years from sixteen to twenty were very active, healthful years. He proved to be a born teacher. He was an omnivorous reader; he had a great liking for science, especially for chemistry; and he had then, as in later years, great power of concentration, and could compel his mind to go on with any task he had set himself to do. He was a good walker: he walked with a friend one midsummer night from Trow-

bridge to Salisbury in order to see the sun rise on the ruins at Stonehenge. In recent years I have been many times surprised at the accuracy of his knowledge of the villages and towns of his native county. One curious fact is that during these same years he "cultivated the muses," as the saying goes, most assiduously. A volume of his productions in verse was constantly lying about at my grandfather's, and when I happened to go there I used to seek the book and read the latest poems. I was not invited to do this, but when he knew it he neither hid the book nor prohibited my reading it. His poems were in many metres and on many subjects. Manifestly intended for publication, they were sometimes briefly annotated, and I remember reading a tentative preface written with the same view. The poems of these early days included one on "Satan and the Archangel," a narrative in a sort of ballad metre (known in our hymn-books as 8.6.8.8.6.). It was founded on the verse in Jude which quotes the contention of Michael the Archangel with the devil over the body of Moses. This piece, recited at a young men's class, in connection with the Wesleyan Chapel, had the good fortune, I understand, to earn warm commendation from the Wesleyan minister who heard it, but I was not old enough when I read it to judge its merits. I remember, however, that even at the time I was a little surprised at the metre chosen to relate so dignified a quarrel.

It must have been during his college days, or in the first year after, that he wrote a complete drama in blank verse, founded on Sir Walter Scott's "Ivanhoe." It is the only poem of his which I read at his own special desire. He

THOMAS RUDDLE'S YOUNGER DAYS

heard me read it to him, no doubt with a view to possible emendations. I only remember of this, as of his other poems, an occasional line or two. I suppose that all his work in this kind was deliberately suppressed and probably destroyed.

I may here mention an incident which a few people living may yet recollect. Just when my brother had completed his four years' service as pupil teacher, and was about to go to Borough Road College, he recited one of his own poems at some little Saturday night concert in Trowbridge. It was called "The Unwelcome Guest." I think it must have been partly reminiscent of *Tam o' Shanter*, for there was certainly a scene where Satan and other wicked sprites appeared playing pranks in early morn. This apparition was not the result of excessive drinking, but of the attempt of a necromancer to raise the dead. It would seem that local tradition attributed this power to—of all unlikely men—the poet Crabbe, who was rector of Trowbridge from 1813—1832. The poem seems to have been intended as a skit on popular superstition. It certainly was never intended as a satire on the poet, whose name happened to be introduced into it. But it made a row. The poem, such as it was, was nervously delivered by a young man not used to appear before any audience more formidable than a class at the British School. It was his way of trying to give his fellow townsmen a quarter of an hour's amusement before his departure for London. On the following Saturday an ill-natured, vulgar, and anonymous letter appeared in the local paper, mocking Mr. Ruddle's "sheepishness" and accusing him very

THOMAS RUDDLE'S YOUNGER DAYS

rudely of uttering "balderdash about a poet whose name is sacred in the town of Trow-bridge" A reply in verse to this anonymous abuse appeared the next Saturday, ending, if I recollect aright, with these two lines:

"But if once more thou wilt the contest dare,
I hurl the gauntlet, come on, foe, prepare!"

The controversy went no further, and the anonymous foe never came out of his hiding. But in that way began my brother's entry upon the world's broad field of battle.

He was two years at the College in Borough Road. I have always heard him refer to its principal, Dr. Joshua Fitch, with great respect. I believe I am correct in saying that at the Christmas examination my brother came out considerably ahead. He made excellent use of his opportunities for general study, but he did not disdain competition in the curious exercise of running down the College steps on all-fours!

His first engagement after leaving the College was at Lewisham, where Mr. T. Rudd was the head master. He was there for only six months. I understand that he gave up his post hoping to be able to go to Oxford—I am not sure which particular College he had in mind—but as the scheme fell through, he shortly afterwards accepted a post at a day school in Weymouth. There he happened to have one or two musical acquaintances, and he took the opportunity to go on with the musical studies he had already commenced at College. His next engagement was at Shebbear. He did not for some time recognize the fact, but he had there found his life's work. There, too, after a period of much trial and many

THOMAS RUDDLE'S YOUNGER DAYS

depressions he found a help-meet for him. Only Heaven and the angels know fully how greatly he was indebted to Margaret Allin for counsel and for comfort during the years of their married life. A braver, gentler soul could not be. The sturdy, manly way in which my brother bore his bereavement when it came always touched me with silent admiration.

I am outstepping my limits. During his College years and the years immediately following, his mind was in that constant state of unrest which is really growth. The general conditions of his life depressed him. The Conference exasperated him. His life seemed full of struggle. Meanwhile he fought his doubts and gathered strength. The Almighty had given him a work to do. Manfully he did it; not without occasional outbursts of impatience which must have seemed disproportioned to those who heard them. But while he was teaching others he was teaching himself—to be a Christian man.

III.

FIRST PERIOD : 1864—1874.

**EARLY EXPERIENCES
AT SHEBBEAR.**



THE first head master of the school at Shebbear was the Rev. H. C. O'Donoghue, M.A., of St. John's College, Cambridge, who had been one of the Chaplains of William IV., but had seceded from the Established Church. He died in 1842, the year following his appointment. Other head masters succeeded him, but to the generation that preceded the year 1864, the chief memories of school life at Shebbear are probably connected with the locality, with old school-fellows, and with the Thorne family, whose devotion and force of character contributed so greatly to the best life of the denomination. It was in that year that the illness of a Bible Christian minister at Portland became a link in the chain of events which made Mr. Ruddle head master of Shebbear College.

The Rev. W. Hopper, who had been President of the Conference in 1862, was then stationed at Portland and Weymouth. He had fallen ill, and a Mr. Beale, who was master of the British School at Portland, had frequently preached for him on Sundays. This coming to the ears of the the managing committee of the school, Mr. Beale was told that he must pledge himself not to do so again. This promise he firmly refused to make, and as a result he had to leave Portland, though his character was of the highest, and he had proved himself an efficient teacher. Mr. Hopper was naturally distressed that his friend should suffer on his account, and, lighting upon an advertisement in the "Bible Christian Magazine" for a master for Prospect School, as the College was then called, he showed it to Mr. Beale, in the

EARLY EXPERIENCES AT SHEBBEAR

hope that the post might suit him. But an unmarried man was required, whereas Mr. Beale had a wife and family; and in other respects the qualifications did not suit him. He therefore handed it to a friend of his at Weymouth, who applied for the post, and was successful in obtaining it. It was under such circumstances that Shebbear secured the services of one who was destined to raise the school to a foremost position among the secondary schools of the West. Mr. Ruddle, in the "Shebbear Old Boys' Magazine" of 1894 gave an account of his journey to Shebbear, which is here reproduced with a few slight omissions:

"Friday, the fifteenth day of January, in the year of our Redemption 1864, was a sombre, melancholy day, but not distressingly cold. A young man rather below the average height elbowed his way with difficulty to the booking-office of the London and South-Western Railway at Waterloo Station, and took a ticket for Bideford. There was no eleven o'clock express to the West in those days. The "parliamentary" crawled lazily from Waterloo to Salisbury, more lazily from Salisbury to Yeovil Junction; and after leaving Yeovil so provokingly slow was the progress that our traveler suspected the engine-driver and guard of a deep-laid conspiracy to be overtaken and run into by a 'goods.' At last, however, the welcome cry 'Axminster' proclaimed that Devonshire was reached. In two full hours the 26½ miles that separate Axminster and Exeter were covered, and the dingy brick metropolis of Devon was reached. It was already dark, and objects appeared indistinct and distorted in the murky atmosphere. What seemed a lofty

EARLY EXPERIENCES AT SHEBBEAR

building could be dimly descried on our traveller's right. Was it the Cathedral of which he had heard much and read a little? He was informed it was the County Gaol! The mistake was pardonable but significant.

"Now came the 48 miles through 'the magnificent scenery of North Devon.' But magnificence is lost on a hungry, jaded man, especially between the hours of 4.30 and 7 p.m. on the fifteenth of January. There was an air of surly loneliness all along the line. Our traveller could only determine his whereabouts by a diligent study of Bradshaw; and when he lost his reckoning in a short nap he could not recover it again till he reached Barnstaple, where a little gleam of light and a little human energy still survived. Most of the passengers left the train at Barnstaple, and our friend was left in his compartment with a single companion.

"'You do not know a place called Shebbear, I suppose? It is somewhere in the neighbourhood of Bideford.'

"'Oh, yes, I know Shebbear very well, and have known it these fifty years.'

"'How far is it from Bideford to Shebbear?'

"'Can't tell exactly. Ten miles or more—a good ten miles—perhaps more.'

"'Sit Deus misericors! The information was not cheering to a starving man.

"'Going to Shebbear, sir?'

"'Yes, but I am surprised to hear it is so far from Bideford. A long carriage ride after a day's fatigue.'

"'A good ten miles, sir, and not the best of roads. A two hours' drive for a good horse. . . . Beg pardon, sir; going to Prospect, to Mr. Thorne's?'

EARLY EXPERIENCES AT SHEBBEAR

“‘ Yes, that is exactly where I hope to go. Is the place so well known, then ? ’

“‘ The man is, sir ; everybody knows Mr. Thorne.’

“‘ Who is Mr. Thorne, then ? ’

“‘ It is plain that you are not a Devonshire man ; every Devonshire man knows James Thorne, the Bryanite preacher.’

“‘ It was the first time our traveller had heard the word Bryanite, and he was puzzled.

“‘ What is a Bryanite preacher ? ’

“‘ They call them Bible Christians now, but Bryanites was the old name. William O’ Bryan used to be their first man, but he is dead or has left the country long ago.’

“‘ Did you ever see William O’ Bryan ? What sort of man was he ? ’

“‘ No, never ; but I have seen James Thorne many a time.’

“‘ Well, what sort of man is he ? ’

“‘ A strong, large-limbed man, with grey eyes that sparkle and dance when he preaches, a good-tempered face, hair cut short and combed straight over his forehead, and a voice that can be loud enough when he likes but is sometimes as soft as a woman’s.’

“‘ Isn’t there a school of some sort at Shebbear ? ’

“‘ Yes, for the young fellows that intend to be ministers ; and for boys, too. I expect you are going to be the master there.’

“‘ Yes, you have hit it. What sort of a place shall I find there ? ’

“‘ Nothing very fine by the way of school. The Bryanites are plain folks, with plain houses, plain dresses, and plain living. You’ll find it pretty lonely there if you come from Bristol or London.’

EARLY EXPERIENCES AT SHEBBEAR

"The conversation was interrupted by their arrival at Bideford. He was met at the station by a young man, apparently about his own age, but a stouter and in every way a finer-looking man, who introduced himself as the 'son of James Thorne, of Shebbear.' There was not by any means the Quaker-like severity about this young man that the schoolmaster, for such he was, anticipated from the conversation in the train.

"The friends were soon seated and moving at an ordinary dog-cart trot. Presently they reached the bridge, a narrow, insubstantial structure, in bad repair. 'This is Bideford Bridge, which you must have heard of—the Bideford Bridge that dined at Annery House,' said Mr. Thorne.

"'Another good dinner would do it no harm,' retorted his companion, 'for it seems limp and shaky just now.'

"Bideford Bridge has been rebuilt since then. A drive up a narrow street, brought the friends to the 'Torridge Inn,' where Mr. Thorne left his horse for a short time while he and the schoolmaster walked round to Silver Street. Pointing to a building on the right hand Mr. Thorne said, 'This is one of our chapels,' and then crossing the street, added, 'and this is the minister's house, where we can get a cup of tea.' A moment after, Mr. Thorne and his friend were welcomed into a very small but bright and cheerful room, with a blazing fire, and a table spread with plain but very inviting food. There was an air of neatness and scrupulous cleanliness about the room and its inmates.

"The appearance of the preacher was a surprise to the schoolmaster, who expected to meet a coarse, self-assertive demagogue, ignorant,

EARLY EXPERIENCES AT SHEBBEAR

narrow, and bigoted. The Silver Street minister was the direct contrary to all this. His black hair was neatly arranged, he had a quiet homely manner, and his welcome was cordial without being wordy.

"But there were 13 miles yet to travel before reaching Shebbear, and the friends were soon compelled to leave the cosy sitting-room in Silver Street, and bid good-bye to their kind entertainers. After the first mile the road from Bideford to Shebbear is up-hill for three miles, and progress is always slow. On the fifteenth of January, 1864, it was provokingly slow and tedious.

"Mr. Thorne's chief business for the first hour or hour and a half was to answer certain grunts and ejaculations—humph! pshaw! hum! etc., the import of which he seemed to apprehend pretty accurately. Presently he exclaimed, 'These are the Annery Cottages mentioned in "Westward Ho!" and that little building yonder is one of our small chapels.' Twenty minutes later he said, 'This is Monk-leigh. We have come four miles. One of our chapels is behind yonder building, but you can't see it from here.' The schoolmaster did not care a straw whether the chapel was within 100 yards or 100 miles; but he was disgusted to learn that they had left but four miles behind them and had to face nine that were yet before them. Frithelstock was next passed. Late as it was there was a blazing fire on a blacksmith's forge and the sound of ringing blows. 'The building just beyond the blacksmith's shop is one of our chapels,' said Mr. Thorne. An hour that seemed three brought the friends to Stibb Cross turnpike. 'That little cottage is used as a preaching place for our people,'

EARLY EXPERIENCES AT SHEBBEAR

said Mr. Thorne ; ' one mile down yonder road is Langtree Chapel, and a little further on another chapel which we call Siloam.' All this seemed monotonous and provoking. In a half-hour Mr. Thorne spoke again : ' That building yonder is one of our two Shebbear chapels. We call it Rowden Chapel.'

" ' Wouldn't it be wise, Mr. Thorne,' grumbled his companion, ' to sell some of these precious chapels and buy some people with the money? I fancy there are about as many chapels as houses in this neighbourhood.'

" And in this unamiable frame of mind the schoolmaster at last reached Prospect School, Shebbear, where he was destined to stay for several years."

His own first impressions are also described in a later Magazine :

" The school as I found it was not such as to inspire hope or confidence. There were 21 or 22 boarders all told, some of whom were candidates for the ministry. The buildings and appliances were utterly inadequate, and the routine of the school work was too exacting and inelastic. Mr. James Thorne did not err in this matter so utterly as John Wesley did. He recognised that healthy, wholesome, out-door games ought to form part of a school-boy's life ; and when he could snatch a moment from his own pressing engagements, which was but seldom, he would look on and enjoy seeing the boys at a tough game of ' bandy ' (hockey). But his admiration of Wesley led him to copy in some things the mistakes of Kingswood. The Sunday régime was a burden too grievous to be borne. On the first Sunday of my stay here I attended the morning prayer-meeting, and

EARLY EXPERIENCES AT SHEBBEAR

remember Mr. Thorne's pitching 'Lingham' (Nativity) to Watts's well-known words, 'Come, let us join our cheerful songs.' As there were hardly half-a-dozen persons present, and it was a cold January morning, one might be pardoned for failing to recognise the 'cheer.'

"Yet Mr. Thorne was as capable a teacher of boys as he was a leader of men. The lessons of his daily life can never be forgotten by those who lived under the same roof; his fervent piety and devotion, which, however, never slopped over, his clear, moral perception, his political sagacity, his general saneness of judgment and action, and his Herculean labours were sufficient to arrest the most careless, and to disarm the most rebellious. Shebbear can never know the debt it owes to James Thorne. In the years 1868-70, the last years of Mr. Thorne's rule, the numbers increased considerably, and there was the distinct promise of future success."

Alongside this may be set the reminiscences of Mr. Ruddle's friend, Rev. John Thorne, of Adelaide, who writes of him as follows:

"My memory of incidents and conversations that might be of interest in a Biography is grown so dim as to be almost a blank, and little besides general impressions remains.

"Mr. Ruddle himself told the story of his introduction to Shebbear in the 'Old Boys' Magazine,' on which I cannot now lay my hand. I was his companion on that occasion, and the acquaintance then formed grew, through years of intimacy, into strong mutual regard and attachment.

"We were young and held our ideas on all subjects with that assurance which usually

EARLY EXPERIENCES AT SHEBBEAR

possesses all-sufficient youth. Up to that time Mr. Ruddle's point of view of religious topics and public questions was very different from that seen by ourselves, and many and warm were the discussions across the tea-table on all sorts of subjects. Mr. Ruddle held to his convictions with great tenacity, and advanced them with fearless combativeness, but *au fond* there must have been a greater sympathy than either side suspected, or he could hardly have become so susceptible of the traditions of Shebbear, and so bold and capable a defender and advocate of the opinions they embodied. There came a marked change in his attitude, undoubtedly owing in large measure to the quiet but almost irresistible influence of the character of James Thorne, who was Governor at that time, and through whom Mr. Ruddle had received the appointment of master.

"The passion for imparting knowledge and the wonderful capacity which soon manifested itself, were accompanied by indefatigable industry in the determination to secure an academical hall-mark for his own attainments. He first resolutely set himself to acquire a London B.Sc., and persevered without the help of laboratories or museums, until he humorously announced that he had been floored at exam. by the skeleton of an albatross, and henceforward contented himself with the B.A. degree which covered so much more than it signified. His knowledge of English and English Literature, so profound, displayed itself in the successes of his boys in so many public examinations.

"He had decided and advanced views on public questions, and his intelligent advocacy during his long residence at Shebbear largely

EARLY EXPERIENCES AT SHEBBEAR

contributed to the enlightened public opinion of North Devon.

"On my visit home in 1895 I found him the same as I had left him twenty years before, and the celebration which called us home owed much to his loyal enthusiasm for the memory of a man whom he revered."

One of the assistant masters of these early days, Mr. James Clapp, afterwards spent several years on the staff of the Merchant Taylors' School. His regard for his old chief is expressed in a later chapter among the Old Boys' Greetings at the time of Mr. Ruddle's retirement. He was himself an excellent penman, whose work adorns some of the old exercise books which are still extant and contain the notes given by the head master at this period, when good text books were scarce or so dear as to be practically beyond the means of the pupils of that day.

Another relates his impressions of Mr. Ruddle at this period as including especially the "desire to excel," the "keen love of work," and the "abhorrence of sham," which characterized Mr. Ruddle at this period. His own zeal for knowledge fired those who were about him. Mental arithmetic, land-surveying, and music were as readily utilized to stimulate the emulation of his pupils as his fascinating lessons in grammar, geography or history; but in whatever way their wits were exercised they must excel as he excelled. He provided out of his own means the first harmonium, and when one of his pupils wished to learn the violin, he himself learnt to play in order to assist him.

Various demands were made upon him, but whether it was for Greek or Latin, French or

EARLY EXPERIENCES AT SHEBBEAR

Spanish or Italian, he made himself equal to the occasion. He was not one who could say with the complacency of a modern English specialist, "I know nothing of science. I have never even taught it." He was prepared to become all things to his pupils if by any means he could get the best out of them. In this he displayed the resource and enterprise of the Scotch "dominies" to whom the educational advancement of that nation owes so much.

Mr. W. B. Luke, who subsequently headed the list in an important Civil Service Competition, was at Shebbear during this period. A portrait group of the Virgil class during the governorship of Rev. R. Blackmore includes that of one who is now a distinguished London physician; whilst other students of these earlier days are prosperous business men in various parts of the world. These received their first training in habits of accuracy and attention to detail, as well as in the skilful adaptation of means to an end, at the hands of this young man of about thirty years of age who was now beginning to realize the possibilities of the sphere of service to which he had been called.

On June 20th, 1871, he married Margaret, the daughter of Mr. Daniel Allin, of Hawkwill, in the parish of Sutcombe, and they lived for a time at Sheepwash, about four miles from Shebbear. Notwithstanding the disadvantage of the daily journey to and fro he contrived, by untiring industry, to take his B.A. degree at London University in the autumn of the following year and then settled down to the full pace of what he now believed to be his life's work.

EARLY EXPERIENCES AT SHEBBEAR

Mr. Blackmore did much to improve the condition of things at Shebbear during his three years' term of office, but reasons of health compelled his retirement in the year 1873, when the Rev. John Gammon was appointed to be his successor.



Shebbear College: Front View.
With Gymnasium and Science Laboratories. Prospect House on the extreme right.

IV.

SECOND PERIOD : 1874—1882.

EXTENSION.



THE year 1874 witnessed the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the School at Shebbear and afforded another illustration of the proverb that "the darkest hour is just before the dawn."

The Rev. John Gammon had been appointed Governor by the Conference of the previous year and had taken up residence soon after his appointment. The change in the governorship has generally had an immediate effect upon the number of pupils. A feeling of uncertainty arises in the minds of parents whose sons are quick to make comparisons between the new régime and the old. The tendency of boys as well as men being to speak against the existing government, such comparison is bound to work out prejudicially to the new order of things. Mr. Gammon had come straight from the duties of a minister in full circuit work to the charge of a number of thoughtless and inconsiderate boys in a boarding-school. The experience was a new one, and it took some time for him to adjust himself to his new position. That saintliness of character which so fully endeared him to his flock, when he was engaged in the pastoral work of the Church, might have proved a disqualification where the wisdom of the serpent was much more necessary than the harmlessness of the dove.

Mr. Gammon had, however, such an admixture of sound common sense with his undoubted piety that he speedily found his way through difficulties which would have disheartened a man of less resolution. It had been reported that his first year's experience had been so try-

EXTENSION

ing that he would probably return to circuit work after the Conference of 1874. This gave an additional element of uncertainty to the condition of things that might obtain at the school in the autumn of that year. The result was seen in the fact that the number of boys who re-assembled after the summer vacation reached the low ebb of twenty-two. When it was found that Mr. Gammon was going to retain the governorship, this number very quickly doubled, and pupils came from all parts of the Connexion, particularly from those circuits where Mr. Gammon's personal influence had made itself felt.

For the next ten or eleven years the school steadily advanced in public esteem. It came to be realized that there was at its head just that combination of influences which was calculated to produce the most beneficial result upon the sensitive natures of young lads whose ages varied from ten or twelve to sixteen or eighteen.

During school hours they were under the guidance and control of a head master who put his conscience into his teaching and acted as an intermediary between his pupils and the greatest minds of ancient and modern times. Out of school they came under the influence of the Governor, whose system of administration secured for the boys entrusted to his care the utmost watchfulness in all that pertained to their physical and moral well-being.

Dual control has often been decried and has sometimes proved an utter failure; but in this instance, as happily in almost every period of the history of the school at Shebbear, its success was undoubted. It would be folly to pretend that there were no occasions when the danger of

EXTENSION

serving two masters became evident. These, however, were so exceptional that they merely had the effect of proving the rule.

Mr. Ruddle now had the opportunity for which his previous experience and training had prepared him. He had won his way into the esteem and confidence of the Connexional authorities, who were more than ever prepared to give him a free hand in the management of the school on its strictly educational side. There came under his influence at this time, also, the sons of some of the leading ministers and laymen of the denomination—men whose hearts were in the cause of educational advancement. With the encouragement of the parents on the one side and the stimulus of an inspiring teacher on the other it is little to be wondered at that pupils thus favoured should have made rapid progress.

The eagerness manifested by his scholars was an additional incentive to the head master, who spared no pains to give them the fullest opportunity for the acquisition of that knowledge which he saw they were hungering after and could readily assimilate. He fostered their eagerness, giving them lessons out of school hours, when the demands upon his time and his duty to the school as a whole made it impossible for him to do them justice in the course of the usual school routine. For at this time he had to instruct the more advanced students single-handed and at the same time to take the general oversight of all the pupils. Fortunately, he was a strong, all-round man, with a mind well-stored as the result of his omnivorous reading and his penetration into almost every branch of

EXTENSION

human knowledge. He was constantly bringing out of the treasure thus accumulated "things new and old," so that never a day passed without some valuable addition to the stock of those who were able and willing to acquire.

The half-yearly school examinations—to the oral part of which parents and friends of the pupils were at that time invited—became more and more interesting. Competition within the school increased, and it soon became evident that its pupils might challenge comparison with those of other better-known schools in the county. This was done by means of the Local Examinations, which have provided such a valuable common measure of education in this country ever since their institution in 1858 through the combined exertions of the late Sir Thomas Dyke Acland and Archbishop Temple, then Bishop of Exeter. Mr. Ruddle's success at Shebbear came to the notice of these eminent educationists, for a question arose between them as to the selection of the first Dyke Exhibitioner, the award being ultimately made in favour of the school at Shebbear, whose candidate, H. W. Horwill, stood first among the competitors for this valuable exhibition in the Senior Oxford Local Examination. The Life of the late Archbishop contains direct reference to this award, which also led Sir Thomas Acland to take a most kindly interest in the school and to speak of its head master in terms of high esteem.

Not long before, William Maurice Hocking had won First Class Honours in the Senior Cambridge Local Examination, whilst other pupils had distinguished themselves at London Matriculation and at important Civil Service Examina-

EXTENSION

tions in which they won high positions in open competition with boys from some of the best-known schools in the country.

These repeated achievements, combined with the assiduous attention paid by the Rev. John Gammon and his family to the domestic care of the students, brought a measure of success to the school which became quite embarrassing to those responsible for its management.

Even while the preliminary work was being done, which led to the successes indicated above, the school began to outgrow the accommodation afforded by the premises known as Prospect House. For a time it was found necessary to send several of the pupils to an adjoining farm as the school premises did not contain sufficient sleeping room. The Connexional authorities therefore sanctioned the building of a fine new schoolroom with a large play-shed beneath it, together with a front block containing two large dormitories and a spacious dining hall, besides other apartments. The foundation-stone was laid by the late Lord Portsmouth, the father of the present Earl, in the year 1877.

So great was the pressure occasioned by the large number of entries at each successive term that the new buildings had to be occupied as soon as they were completed, and in some cases even before the last details had been supplied. The years 1877 and 1878 therefore proved to be a period of great strain and anxiety for both the governor and the head master. Some alarm was caused by the fall of one of the large chimneys which rose from the front wall of the main building and, together with the gabled windows, served as a relief to the long stretch of roofing

EXTENSION

which covers the greater dormitories. Between thirty and forty boys were sleeping in the large upper dormitory, which extends the full length of the main block. An October gale from the south-west was blowing before midnight, and was of such exceptional violence that it proved too much for the mass of brick which had so recently been placed in position high above the eaves. Fortunately the massive beams in the roof supported the greater portion of the lower part of the chimney and kept it suspended above the heads of the boys who were sleeping directly beneath. The upper part of the chimney fell into the centre of the room, leaving a huge gap in the roof, through which the wind blew a hurricane.

The night lamp happened to be in the path of the falling bricks, and was put out as they fell. The boys, rudely awakened from their first slumbers, fled for safety to various parts of the school buildings, some of them even rushing out upon the lawn in their night-clothes. It was not long before the whole school was aroused, and the roll was called to see if anyone was missing. One boy did not respond to his name, and, as he belonged to the great dormitory, the governor immediately went in search of him. Taking his storm-lamp he made his way to the far end of the dormitory, and, scrambling over the debris he discovered the boy in bed fast asleep, in a corner where the wind was howling round him. "Where's my Sammy? Where's my Sammy?" cried the boy as for the first time he awoke to the consciousness that some disaster had happened, and that his brother was not in his usual place beside him.

EXTENSION

Apart from the damage done to the building and the shock to the nerves occasioned by so great a crash and such a disturbance of the normal calm of a sleeping household, there were no ill-effects resulting from an event which might, however, have proved disastrous in the extreme. As in every such crisis, the lesson of dependence upon a Higher Power was brought home to every boy. Until the storm subsided the night was spent in the singing of hymns and the reading of passages of Scripture, with such conversation upon them as served to impress upon those who listened the fact that at any rate their chiefs were convinced of the reality of Divine protection, and that they felt most devoutly grateful to Him of whom it is said, "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

Other events served to deepen impressions thus made and to show the essential unity of feeling which existed between the heads of such an institution and those who were entrusted to their care. Richard Trembath, a gifted young Cornishman, was one of a number of students who were sent to the school year by year by direction of the Conference to prepare for the ministry. He gave special promise of becoming an effective and honoured minister of the Bible Christian Connexion. Mr. Ruddle took a great interest in him because of his manifest capability and earnestness and his unassuming demeanour. It was a great blow to him as well as to the governor and to the whole school when, after a very brief illness, Trembath succumbed to an attack of pneumonia. The school had been singularly free from sickness of any kind, and

EXTENSION

a malady so serious had scarcely been contemplated. When it appeared so suddenly and carried off one who was apparently one of the strongest and most promising of the whole number, it enforced, as no other event could, the lesson that "in the midst of life we are in death." None of his pupils could fail to note the effect upon the mind of the head master. Several of his senior pupils were frequently invited to his house, where they could see upon one of the walls the framed memorial which he had asked one of them to prepare for him in illuminated lettering. At the foot of the inscription we read the words significant of a hope that was real and a faith that was deep: "Non omnis moriar"—I shall not wholly die.

But the most tragic event of this kind was the death, by accident, in his own home, of Maurice Hocking soon after he had sat for the Cambridge Local Examination, of which mention has been made above. He was expected to return to school after the Christmas vacation, when there came the news that he had met with a serious accident which had caused his death. The head master's grief was intense. He had spent the greater part of the vacation in preparing for the return of so brilliant a scholar. Knowing that his time would be limited for giving personal attention to such a student, he had drawn up a scheme of study and accumulated notes and aids which should serve to guide him at those periods when Mr. Ruddle was engaged with other students. This had involved the actual working-out in detail of the most difficult problems in the mathematical text books, so that the solutions might be at hand in clear form if this budding

EXTENSION

mathematician should at any time be non-plussed. For the chief despised the published keys and was almost fierce in his denunciation of those who resorted to them. If he came across key or crib in the possession of any student, however legitimate might be the use which was being made of it, "Bah!" he would say, "burn it!"

In this way he taught them to be self-reliant and to face their difficulties boldly, rather than to shirk them, and he himself was such an example of earnest and patient endeavour in the investigation of the subtlest problems that it was thought unmanly to ask for aid until every means had been tried by which a solution might otherwise be found.

To such a man a brilliant pupil was an incentive to greater effort and the loss experienced was a disappointment as well as a discipline. It also came at a time when Mr. Ruddle was passing through his "Sturm-und-Drang" period, to use a phrase which was often on his lips at that time. It certainly was an epoch of stress and strain, and the acute observer could well perceive that the experience was no less due to external events than to internal perplexities.

A combination of influences was driving him to seek for mental and spiritual rest. His was a restless soul, and intellectually he browsed in any pasture. His love of Carlyle made him delight in extravagant and startling statements. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to shock some grave and reverend senior by an outburst of iconoclasm which would make him doubt the head master's fitness for his position. He hated mere convention and was such a foe to priggishness and conceit that he suspected their presence

EXTENSION

in some of the most sincere and simple-minded souls. Himself the most dogmatic of men, he was a sworn foe to the most cherished dogma of another if he thought it was held merely by reason of its general acceptance and not from pure conviction. It is little wonder, therefore, that for a time he was misunderstood, and that misgivings were expressed as to the real value of his work and the effect of his influence upon his pupils. He secured, however, the strenuous support of the more robust minds of the Connexion, whilst there can be no doubt that he came in for some amount of faithful admonition as well as criticism from his candid friends. It is in some respects his greatest triumph that he should have won lasting esteem in a sphere where permanent misunderstanding and alienation might have been so easy.

The fact is that these outbursts were but the expression of the pent-up struggle that was going on within him. The philosophic doubt which characterized the teaching of Huxley and Tyndall was coming into conflict with the religious certainties of a less intellectual, but none the less sincere, set of men amongst whom he had to live and the purity of whose lives was before him as the constant manifestation of the power of the Gospel to elevate and ennoble. The constant zeal, the integrity of purpose, the never-swerving fidelity to the loftiest ideals of men like James Thorne, Frederick William Bourne and John Gammon reacted upon the mind and soul of Thomas Ruddle as certainly as his personal influence told upon them and upon the Connexion in whose interest they laboured.

The outcome was that when he was nearly

EXTENSION

through the fourth decade of his life there came a marked change of attitude with regard to questions of Church administration and doctrine, and the ultimate result was that he who had aforesaid affected to speak somewhat lightly of the pulpit and its influence was found ministering to the congregations in and around Shebbear, choosing as one of his earliest texts, "Last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

It was probably at this period of his life that he went through the remarkable experience of an all-night vigil in which he struggled once for all with the doubts that had assailed him. One who shared his confidence has recently told the writer this story, and the contemplation of that night of prayerful striving against the powers of darkness has brought back with added meaning his oft-quoted words from Goethe's "Faust":

"The good man by hard strivings torn
Shall yet perceive the better way."

V.

THIRD PERIOD : 1882—1892.
FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.



THE early eighties saw the College at Shebbear well established in the esteem of parents throughout the Denomination and of a growing connection outside, since it was found that at a very moderate cost it was possible to get for a boy an education fitting him for any position in life and to surround him with influences which were bound to tell for good upon his character.

H. W. Horwill, who had been the first winner of the Dyke Exhibition open to candidates from the three Western Counties, had added to it a further success by securing a scholarship of £80 per annum at Wadham College, Oxford. During his stay at that University he won the Chancellor's Prize for an English Essay on "The Right Method of Studying the Greek and Latin Classics," and in the year after he left Oxford he came out first in Classics at the M.A. examination of the University of London, with the Gold Medal, having competed against a second candidate of exceptional brilliance, who was himself noted as "qualified for the medal."

Two other students who had received their preliminary training at the College subsequently won the diploma of Doctor of Laws at London University. One of these, Dr. F. W. Richards, was one of a number of students who came from the distant colony of South Australia. For some years there was a succession of such students from the other side of the globe. They were no doubt impelled to such a course by the knowledge that the Chief Justice and Lieutenant Governor of their colony, now the Right Honourable Sir Samuel Way, Bart., was himself an

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

old Shebbear boy, and by the great interest taken by the Rev. John Thorne, son of the Rev. James Thorne, in the development of Shebbear College. The exodus from Devon and Cornwall to Canada and Australia had taken a large number of Bible Christians into these colonies. These were followed, at their own request, by ministers who responded to the urgent invitations sent. Among those who went out was the Rev. James Way, father of the Chief Justice, and now in the after years the sons and grandsons of those who left these shores so many years before were sent to Shebbear, that they might drink at the fount of those beneficent influences which had sprung from that historic centre.

"Everything shall live whither the river cometh" was one of Mr. Ruddle's later texts, and the words of one of his Australian pupils will show how certainly this was fulfilled in his own impress upon the lives of others: "I was placed in a peculiarly favourable position to be affected by him. Leaving home when 13½ years of age I had the benefit of a good start and then passed on to our common master. Removed from *fresh* home influences (except such as came through the regular letters)—and of course those that were there already never died out—I came for several years under the wonderful influence of Thomas Ruddle, and I can safely say that in matters of religion and politics no less than in the things one ordinarily learns at school, the contents of my mind—and of my heart—emanate from him to a remarkable extent."

The same writer says: "What a wonderful appreciation he had of the Scriptures! I have

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

never found another man who saw their true inwardness like him or had a keener spiritual perception. And Mr. Ruddle's greatest achievements as a teacher were in the moral and spiritual rather than in the intellectual sphere. The memory of him makes meanness or shoddy work despicable, and anything less than reverence for purity and womanhood, above all, of motherhood, unnatural. It makes one hate cant and narrowness, it makes one seek after truth and honestly attempt to follow it—and much more that cannot be expressed and can scarcely be definitely realised."

In October, 1882, Sir Thomas Dyke Acland distributed the prizes, and in the course of his address said : "I thought it my duty to make myself personally acquainted with the College, and therefore went all over the buildings yesterday. I was very much pleased with them. Great care appears to have been taken on sanitary grounds ; and what is of more importance, on moral grounds. The arrangements in the dormitories seem to be, on the whole, what is best. Publicity, everything open and above-board, is the most sure safeguard for good morality in public schools. I am very much pleased with the buildings in every respect. There is no nonsense about them, no waste of money ; and they do credit to the Connexion."

At the same time Sir Thomas Acland urged upon the College authorities the immediate building of a Science Laboratory. He himself subscribed liberally to the funds necessary for such a purpose and his example was followed by W. J. Harris, Esq., J.P., of Halwill Manor, a great friend of the College, and an admirer of

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Ruddle, whom he used to describe as "one of the ten best teachers in the country."

This formed part of a new scheme of extension which was opened by Sir Thomas Acland in 1884, the year before Mr. Gammon retired from the Governorship, after twelve years' successful service. It is interesting to be able to place on record the head master's own testimony to the value of the work of one who had so long been associated with him in the responsibilities attached to such an office :

"The constant personal attention paid to the pupils by the Governor, involving, as I know it does, incessant activity and not infrequently exhausting labour, is most praiseworthy. Great part of this toil is necessarily expended on pupils too young to appreciate the kindness and too thoughtless to regard it in any other light than a ' bore ' ; and yet in this matter, as in the case of diet, I appeal in confirmation of my own testimony to that of our numerous ex-pupils scattered up and down the country."

Mr. Ruddle's aim at this period may also be given in his own words :

"We put on no airs. We have no more ambition to imitate the aims and methods of our great public schools, than we have ability to rival their numbers, wealth, and prestige. Few of our pupils will proceed to the Universities ; should any do so, we trust they will do us no discredit there ; but this is not our general aim. We wish to prepare our pupils thoroughly for the duties of professional life, for situations in the Civil Service, or for mercantile and agricultural pursuits. And for this purpose we hold it to be of as great importance to be intelli-

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

gent and true, as to be familiar with grammars and lexicons; to be of even more consequence to know how to deny one's self for another's sake, than how to enter a drawing-room or pick up a pocket handkerchief."

It is evident that he has here in mind some of the criticism expressed or implied which had been levelled against him as being too prone to make light of the amenities and conventionalities of life, and thereby to dispose his pupils in the same direction. There was some element of justice in the criticism and some apparent lack of consistency in the subject of it, for no man could be more sensible of the courtly grace and dignity of the true lady or gentleman. When he found himself in the presence of such, his natural courtesy of heart came to his rescue and saved him from an awkwardness that might otherwise have been painful. Under no circumstances, however, would he allow his courtesy to hide his convictions.

The Home Rule controversy of this period brought him into conflict with many whose good opinion he had recently won and whose friendship he cherished. He made it his boast, however, that he was a Home Ruler before Mr. Gladstone, and on no account would he lower his flag. A lady of title, whose esteem for him suffered no diminution because of this difference of opinion, sought an interview with him with the object of securing his conversion to the Unionist cause. In the course of a long argument she exhausted all her powers of persuasion—to which her charm of manner lent a double force—in trying to convince him of the mistake he was making. He had not made up

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

his mind, however, without due consideration, and, moved as he may have been, by the earnest appeals of his titled friend, he at last clinched his resolve and silenced her pleadings by saying, with an emphatic blow of his clenched fist upon the table near him, "I would rather lose my right arm, my lady, than I would take any part in preventing England from righting the wrongs which she has so long done to Ireland."

The Conference of the year 1885 had a difficult task when it was called upon to choose a successor to the Rev. John Gammon, upon whom the strain of the past twelve years at Shebbear had told considerably. Writing to the Rev. John Thorne in October of that year Mr. Ruddle says :

"You have without doubt heard before now something of the affairs of last Conference in reference to the choice of a successor to Mr. Gammon. It was perhaps one of the most perplexing affairs that Conference ever had to deal with. At first Mr. Reed was chosen by an overwhelming majority. Messrs. X and Z had been nominated, but in some way or other neither of them could command the confidence of the Conference. I believe the alleged causes were want of refinement in the case of Mr. X and a somewhat imperious manner in the case of Mr. Z. From my own personal knowledge of both these men I believe that both objections were groundless. Mr. X does not lay claim to much culture, but he is one of Nature's gentlemen, and his devotion to the work would, I feel sure, have secured success. And since I have known Mr. Z I have found out that his hauteur is at most confined to his manner and does not spring from his disposition. Still,

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

there is no doubt at all in my mind that of all men I know Mr. Reed is the best prepared, taking him all round, to make the school a splendid success. His wonderful enthusiasm, his acute common sense, his utter self-abnegation, and his love of education for its own sake, fit him very peculiarly for such a work. And all this is deepened in his case by an intense interest in the traditions of the place and a burning desire to see the highest hopes of those who are fallen asleep realised here. It was, however, felt by both Mr. Reed himself and by most of us that it was in the highest degree risky to remove him just then from Edgehill. A very costly extension was in the course of erection and we had already invested between £6,000 and £7,000 there. Under Mr. Reed and Miss Wooldridge the place had prospered beyond the most sanguine hopes of the most sanguine among us. It was therefore thought best to rescind the first appointment. And now came a deadlock. It was suggested that I should take the full management of the place. But my wife is never very strong [and her health at that time was quite unequal to the strain]. This, therefore, was not practicable. After long consultation Rev. Jehu Martin was elected to the post. He seems to be doing all he possibly can to make the place a success ; and I most sincerely hope that the event will show that Providence was pointing the way when we were all seemingly walking in darkness."

The plans of himself and the new Governor may also be expressed in his own words :

"Mr. Martin is doing what he can to give an attractive look to the place both outside and inside. He has already bought some new

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

furniture and will purchase a great deal more. As soon as we get Lake Farm we shall plant some hundreds of trees to give a sylvan appearance to the place. This, I rejoice to think, agrees very exactly with the ideas of your father [Rev. James Thorne], who in so many ways lived before most of us. He, I know, planted scores of trees, some of which have been destroyed of necessity in the course of our building. But we are returning to the lines marked out for us. The want of trees was spoken of quite independently by Sir T. D. Acland and by W. J. Harris, Esq. (M.P. for Poole), two of the best friends the school ever had. We are now contemplating two or three important additions, viz., a swimming and plunging bath, a gymnasium, a lawn-tennis green (where the old playground used to be), and a plot of land for experiments in Agricultural Chemistry and for planting specimens of the Natural Orders not found in the neighbourhood of Shebbear. By the way, you may have noticed that in Botany we have secured several marked successes. J. M. Gover was fourth in England in that subject at the Cambridge Local Senior and first in English."

For a few years there were no brilliant successes at the annual local examinations, but the seed was being sown which prepared the way for marked success in the future. In the year 1887, when Sir John Budd Phear distributed the prizes, we find among the prize-winners the names of John Rounsefell, the illustrious student and teacher who was destined to become Mr. Ruddle's successor in the head mastership of the College; Carl Raab, who in 1891 won the second position in the examination for Student Inter-

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

preterships and entered the Consular Service in China, where he unfortunately died, at an early age, of small-pox ; Thomas Tickle, who subsequently won the "Jacob Bell " Scholarship, which gave him special training at the Pharmaceutical College in Bloomsbury Square, London, where he won the bronze medal for Botany, the Hanbury Prize for Chemistry and Pharmacy, the Perocia Silver Medal and the Redwood Scholarship ; H. E. Down, who won a good position in the Civil Service ; J. S. Badcock, who went out as a Church of England missionary to Korea ; and F. W. Richards, whose success has been already noted.

In the year 1891 one of the College students appeared in the First Class Honours list of the Senior Oxford Local Examination and was awarded a scholarship open to unattached students at the University. He subsequently won a First Class in Mathematics and secured an appointment in the Higher Civil Service.

The last years of this period were clouded by a succession of trials and disappointments, combined with the additional anxiety of domestic affliction. Writing to Mr. Thorne Mr. Ruddle tells him that one of his former pupils and assistant masters, in whom he had taken an especial interest "left us last Christmas to marry. It was a terrible stroke to me as I had long looked upon him as the one who would be carrying on the work here when I am sleeping beside your father in the chapel yard." Then, unfortunately for his peace of mind, he became once more subject to a good deal of adverse criticism, as the school was passing through a phase not unknown in any successful school,

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

when a large amount of fallow ground has to be broken up and cultivated before any great success can be reaped. What has been said above is sufficient proof that sound work was being done, but impatient critics demand immediate results in a realm where the surest work is often done by the slowest means. Moreover, a school of this kind is very sensitive to change in régime and, though the governor appointed to succeed Mr. Gammon did his utmost to maintain the best traditions of his predecessor and instituted several reforms, some time elapsed before his efforts were fully recognised and appreciated. Mr. Martin had been a free and outspoken critic of Connexional officials when he was himself engaged in circuit work. Now that he had become an official attached to one of the Connexional institutions he found himself the subject of similar criticism. He had a high ideal before him and was undoubtedly doing his best, but there were not wanting those who professed to regard him as responsible for the apparently diminishing popularity of the College. He in his turn pointed to the decline in the number of prominent successes in the public examinations year by year. The stay of pupils was too short for anything like advanced work. Mr. Ruddle had already stated that "the education we offer cannot be acquired in less than four or five years. . . . At present the average stay of pupils at the College is only two years, consequently many boys leave us whose education cannot possibly do us any credit." There was also a growing feeling in some parts of the Connexion that the situation of the College was not a desirable one. Mr. Ruddle had himself previ-

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

ously combated and disproved such an opinion. "The locality of the College has from the very first been the subject of hot debate, and even to-day there are many trusty friends of the Denomination who believe it was ill-chosen." After frankly stating the chief disadvantages he goes on to state that these are "outweighed by advantages of immensely greater importance." Among these are "the exceptional salubrity of the climate" and "the moral atmosphere is as wholesome as the material." "The Connexional College has from the first enjoyed the very blessings which the Governors of our great public schools so highly value and so eagerly seek." He then comments on the smallness of the size of such towns as Eton and Rugby ; Harrow, Marlborough, and Winchester. After adding that "the founders of our modern so-called 'county' schools have nearly always selected sites similar in all points essential to Shebbear," he emphasizes the effect of tradition in moulding the character of a school. This leads up to an outburst which comes straight from his heart :

"Shebbear has one glorious tradition. The indefatigable labours, the self-sacrifice, the faith and humility of James Thorne were never in his life-time as great a force in the school as they are to-day. And I venture to predict that when we are passed away, and great part of our work with us,—when other governors and masters shall within these walls educate the heads and hearts of pupils yet unborn—the story of that devoted life shall be a mightier power for good than ever yet it has anywhere been. Our educational traditions we are trying hard to create, and tough uphill work we

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

find it, too, but those who would remove the College from Shebbear would unintentionally rob us of our gentlest, yet most effective, instrument of religious culture. This has been too much forgotten ; may I hope it will not be so in time to come ? ”

Fortunately there was one old Shebbear boy, occupying an illustrious position in a distant colony, who was able to put an end for ever to any scheme for removing the College. Sir Samuel Way, Chief Justice of South Australia and Chancellor of the University of Adelaide, had in 1880 given five acres of land to the College for the purpose of a playground, with the understanding that a new house for the head master should be erected on one part of it. When he was in England in 1891 he took part in the jubilee celebration of the foundation of the College and distributed the prizes. At the close of the distribution he said, “There is yet another prize to be given, not to the boys, but to the school itself.” This was Lake Farm, an estate of seventy acres adjoining the school premises, and the generous motive of the donor is best indicated in his own words: “When I acquired Lake Farm it was because of the interest I took in it as the cradle of the Bible Christian Connexion. I purchased it, not for the purpose of making money, but in order that the land which had so many sacred associations to us Bible Christians all over the world might be secured for the benefit of the Denomination in perpetuity.”

At the same time he paid a high tribute to the influence of the head master : “When the history of the Connexion comes to be written, the name

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

of Thomas Ruddle will be recorded as one of its master-builders."

But even whilst such praise was being uttered Thomas Ruddle was passing through the sternest ordeal of his life. His freedom and frankness in discussion rendered him liable to misunderstanding and even to adverse criticism. A line of cleavage had for some time been manifesting itself between his own policy and that of the Governor. Both were strong men, but their methods and judgement entirely differed. The result was a growing alienation between them, which became more pronounced as the years passed. Each of them found strong sympathy among friends outside the College, when the questions of difference between them came to be discussed in the Connexional councils. At length it became evident that a separation must be effected, and for a brief space of time it was an acute question which of them should be removed in the interests of the College. After a lengthy debate at the Conference of 1892, held at Newport, in the Isle of Wight, it was decided by a large majority that a new Governor must be appointed forthwith. It is only fair to add that among those who voted with the majority on this occasion there were some who were influenced to do so by the consideration that whilst a place in the ranks of the ministry could be found for the Governor there was no possibility of retaining the valued services of Mr. Ruddle to the Connexion outside of the College. It is needless to say that his old pupils, almost to a man, stood by him loyally throughout this trying period.

In the previous October Mr. Ruddle had

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

attended the Œcumenical Conference at Washington in company with Chief Justice Way, the Rev. F. W. Bourne and other members appointed by the Conference. Upon his return his wife, who had been ailing for some time, was again taken seriously ill. In December, 1891, he writes to his friend, Mr. Thorne: "I am sorry to tell you that Mrs. Ruddle, after getting better for a few weeks, during which she gained strength rapidly, has had a renewed attack and is again dangerously ill. I am afraid it can only end in one and the worst way, and it is a fear that takes all the spirit and courage out of me."

On the 14th of April following he wrote a brief but sorrowful letter to Chief Justice Way to inform him that—

"After very intense suffering heroically borne my poor darling passed from death to life on Friday last, the 8th inst., at 5 o'clock p.m. She was buried yesterday among the sainted dead in Lake Chapel Yard, amid the tears of numerous friends—especially old pupils who knew and loved her. For many years Mrs. Ruddle had lived as she hoped to die. She has died as she lived—true and faithful unto death; courageous in the face of the last great enemy; fearing no evil, *for Thou art with me* (her dying words). It is well with her, but I am left lonely—and it will be weary waiting till I meet her again."

How for seventeen years he waited and came through the valley triumphant, with the hopeful assurance of Browning, whose devotion, in similar experience, compared with his own, remains to be told in the subsequent pages of this brief narrative.



Thomas Ruddle in his Earlier Years at Shebbear.

VI.

**FOURTH PERIOD :
CONTINUED SUCCESS AND
CLOSING DAYS.**



THE Conference of 1892 appointed the Rev. Robert Spencer to be the Governor of the College. This appointment was made on the suggestion of the Rev. J. C. Honey, one of the most faithful and best beloved of the ministers of the Connexion. The nomination came as a happy inspiration, for no sooner was it made than the Conference recognized the man of its choice. But he was absent, and there was some doubt of his acceptance, as he was one who shunned official position. A reply came, however, which plainly indicated with what reluctance and with how great a sense of responsibility he accepted the "call" which had come to him so unexpectedly. His record as Governor during the next eight years is the best testimony to the wisdom of the choice then made. Mr. Ruddle soon tells Mr. Thorne: "No man has ever conducted this place more entirely in the spirit of your father than Mr. Spencer is doing." The reaction upon his own spirits he compares to "getting out into the fresh air." He prophesies that the school will advance "by leaps and bounds." He also reports "an unusual number of candidates for the ministry" and "one pupil who is studying with a view to entering the Established Church."

This, by the way, is one of those indications of the catholicity of Thomas Ruddle, everywhere to be met with in his correspondence and writings generally, as they were in his spoken utterances in the class or pulpit. Several of his pupils have entered the ministry of other

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND CLOSING DAYS

Churches than the one with which he was most directly identified, but all alike have felt the power of his personality and the breadth of his teaching.

He has not lost sight of the purely academic work of the school, for he is able to report at the same time the eminent success of a pupil at one of the higher Civil Service Examinations : "He had to compete not only with many Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin, King's College and University College men—and with the best men of Wren and Gurney's—but he beat them all—save one—standing second in merit." In Latin he had to compete with a "double-first" Oxford man and beat him, being first in that subject. He was also first in Geometry, obtaining the maximum of marks. "In Arithmetic he was bracketed first with another, also getting the maximum of marks, and in these subjects he had received no training whatever outside Shebbear." Then in cheerful tone he adds : "This is proof, I think, that we are not falling off." He further mentions the fact that he has been appointed to preach the Conference Sermon at Bristol in 1894. "This, I take it, is really a vote of confidence" after the events of last year.

He was also appointed to act as Secretary to carry out the proposals for the "James Thorne Centenary Celebrations in 1895," and to consult with the Rev. John Thorne, who came to England to take part in these celebrations at the "Thorne Memorial" Chapel, Barnstaple, in that year, and to act as President of the Conference for the year following.

At that Conference Mr. Ruddle gave one of his finest addresses on education, the subject allotted

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND CLOSING DAYS

to him being "James Thorne in relation to Education." He amplified a passage in the recently-published "Centenary Life of James Thorne," written by Rev. F. W. Bourne, in which it was said of Mr. Thorne: "He had the manners of one nobly born, and the aptitudes and instincts of a scholar, which thousands more highly favoured by circumstances entirely fail to acquire."

"This," said he, "is as strikingly true as it is correctly and happily expressed. There is, in fact, a deeper insight into the true meaning and end of education in this short sentence than in many a large treatise that I could readily name." Then follows an address which is described by the one who reports it as "a splendid example of his inner and higher teaching," and leads to the comment: "Happy that lad who has caught even in a far-off way something of his head master's meaning and aim for the lad and for the school!" Part of this address has been reproduced in the consideration of his educational ideals in the Introductory Chapter.

To Sir Samuel Way he writes in the same year: "Both Mr. Spencer and his family have done everything in their power to make all around them happy and to make the school a great success. It is certain that there was never a better esprit-de-corps among masters and pupils, Governor and family, than now. I am exceedingly gratified that affairs are thus prosperous and peaceful during the visit of Mr. and Miss Thorne to England."

During the period of Mr. Spencer's Governorship there was steady progress in every department of the work of the College, which was suffi-

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND CLOSING DAYS

In the following January he reports that the school is "quite full—crowded—so that we have had most reluctantly to refuse several applications . . . and it is probable that every vacancy likely to occur at Easter will be filled within the next few days." He describes the year 1898 as a "financial record in the history of the College. . . . Educationally also it was one of the best we have known, although no single pupil achieved a success equal to the best efforts of Horwill, Hocking, Gover, or Raab. These four were altogether exceptional men, and we must not expect a succession of exceptional men, or they would no longer be exceptional. But the general success of the pupils was at its highest."

In 1900 he expresses his disappointment at not being able to visit Australia. "I should have greatly enjoyed the trip and still more the meeting with the old boys who have been so mindful of us since they left." Extension is still going on, including a new gymnasium and science laboratory, "the best equipped in my opinion west of Bristol," and two large classrooms. He regrets the tendency in Methodism at home to be constantly "coquetting with Union," and does not forget that on former occasions "we have been snubbed, distinctly, unequivocally snubbed." Presently he asks: "Why on earth are people so anxious for these alliances? Cannot we go on doing our own work honestly in our own way? Should the time come for a genuine alliance—organic union, if you please—of all the Methodist bodies, then we shall be prepared for concerted action, and meantime we can work and wait."

The year 1900 saw another change of

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND CLOSING DAYS

Governors at Shebbear. The Conference of that year appointed the Rev. W. B. Lark, whose work as a minister and the high esteem in which he was held throughout the Connexion, was likely to command the confidence of the parents of pupils. Mr. Ruddle, who had already spoken of him as "one of our truest and noblest-minded men," soon notes that "Mr. Lark is doing very well as Governor." During the summer vacation of the following year he visited "a very dear friend at Paisley" and the Glasgow Exhibition, of which "the distinguishing feature was its admirable arrangement, in which it vastly excelled either of the Paris Expositions." He also went to Rothesay, where he found the "scenery charming, hotels and eating-houses dirty, charges exorbitant. The Scotch, rightly or wrongly, have won a high reputation in many ways; but at a Scotch hotel one must expect to pay for dirt and discomfort more than in England one would have to pay for courtesy and cleanliness." On his way home he spent a few days with his second son at Oxford. "Of course a day or two at Oxford is always a great treat." He was present at the Œcumenical Conference at City Road only part of the time, as Mr. Lark was also a member, and it was necessary for them to divide the attendance between them because "we could not both be absent from the College at the beginning of a new term—a term when we had booked 24 new pupils." At this Conference he spoke for a few minutes in the discussion on "The Spiritual Vitality of Methodism." "I always think," said he, "that a good test of organic life is its power to reproduce itself. I believe all scientists say that the real

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND CLOSING DAYS

In the following January he reports that the school is "quite full—crowded—so that we have had most reluctantly to refuse several applications . . . and it is probable that every vacancy likely to occur at Easter will be filled within the next few days." He describes the year 1898 as a "financial record in the history of the College. . . . Educationally also it was one of the best we have known, although no single pupil achieved a success equal to the best efforts of Horwill, Hocking, Gover, or Raab. These four were altogether exceptional men, and we must not expect a succession of exceptional men, or they would no longer be exceptional. But the general success of the pupils was at its highest."

In 1900 he expresses his disappointment at not being able to visit Australia. "I should have greatly enjoyed the trip and still more the meeting with the old boys who have been so mindful of us since they left." Extension is still going on, including a new gymnasium and science laboratory, "the best equipped in my opinion west of Bristol," and two large classrooms. He regrets the tendency in Methodism at home to be constantly "coquetting with Union," and does not forget that on former occasions "we have been snubbed, distinctly, unequivocally snubbed." Presently he asks: "Why on earth are people so anxious for these alliances? Cannot we go on doing our own work honestly in our own way? Should the time come for a genuine alliance—organic union, if you please—of all the Methodist bodies, then we shall be prepared for concerted action, and meantime we can work and wait."

The year 1900 saw another change of

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND CLOSING DAYS

Governors at Shebbear. The Conference of that year appointed the Rev. W. B. Lark, whose work as a minister and the high esteem in which he was held throughout the Connexion, was likely to command the confidence of the parents of pupils. Mr. Ruddle, who had already spoken of him as "one of our truest and noblest-minded men," soon notes that "Mr. Lark is doing very well as Governor." During the summer vacation of the following year he visited "a very dear friend at Paisley" and the Glasgow Exhibition, of which "the distinguishing feature was its admirable arrangement, in which it vastly excelled either of the Paris Expositions." He also went to Rothesay, where he found the "scenery charming, hotels and eating-houses dirty, charges exorbitant. The Scotch, rightly or wrongly, have won a high reputation in many ways; but at a Scotch hotel one must expect to pay for dirt and discomfort more than in England one would have to pay for courtesy and cleanliness." On his way home he spent a few days with his second son at Oxford. "Of course a day or two at Oxford is always a great treat." He was present at the Œcumenical Conference at City Road only part of the time, as Mr. Lark was also a member, and it was necessary for them to divide the attendance between them because "we could not both be absent from the College at the beginning of a new term—a term when we had booked 24 new pupils." At this Conference he spoke for a few minutes in the discussion on "The Spiritual Vitality of Methodism." "I always think," said he, "that a good test of organic life is its power to reproduce itself. I believe all scientists say that the real

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND CLOSING DAYS

proof of life is—whether life can reproduce itself. The highest form of life that a man knows anything about is the Christian life, and it seems to me that the time is coming when we shall have to be tried, and all Christian forms will have to be tried, by their power to produce Christian gentlemen, and the Church which cannot do that cannot live or will not live permanently.”

The “most impressive scenes of the Conference” to him, as to all present, were those connected with the assassination of President McKinley. When “a telegram was read announcing a sudden and alarming change of condition, all discussion was at once interrupted, and the Conference resolved itself into a prayer-meeting—and such a prayer-meeting! It would have helped your father,” he tells Mr. Thorne, “to bear a twelve months’ rebuke and hardship. Mr. Bourne was one of those who prayed.”

In the following year he announces the fact of the death of his aged father at 86; the marriage of his eldest daughter; and, finally, the success of one of his ablest pupils, C. F. Werren, in winning a mathematical scholarship of £80 a year at Queen’s College, Oxford. Of this promising young man he says: “He is one of the purest, noblest lads that ever entered or left Shebbear.” His grief may be imagined when, not long after, he learnt that one so gifted had lost his life in a boating accident on the Thames in company with the son of Principal Clemens, of Ranmoor College, Sheffield.

At this time he had to lose one of the ablest assistants he ever had, and other changes in the staff made him fear that the burden of work would fall very heavily on his shoulders. “I

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND CLOSING DAYS

must look forward to a hard uphill fight again—and this does not appear quite so trifling a matter as it did twenty years ago. Plainly I am not to take off my clothes till bedtime." But though his pessimism sometimes overcame him at this period it is not long before the cloud "is decidedly lifting." He says in 1903 "the educational work of last year was exceptionally good," and a long list of successes and honours is recorded.

There is a pathos in the tone of his letters at this time as he notes how many of the stalwarts of the Connexion he had so long served are falling out of the ranks. His old boys, too, are passing: "One by one the old familiar faces pass away to be no more seen. I have lately been looking up the names of old Shebbear boys—pupils in my time—who have already gone to the place where all roads meet. Among them are the names of some who were apparently as tough as steel and sound as a bell. On the other hand, some who seemed but half alive, and whose lives one would have been ready to accept at five or ten years' purchase, are living still and likely to live." But he quickly turns again to the careers of his pupils who are distinguishing themselves in various fields of service. One of them "has been in India, Burma, South Africa, and where not? He is a most intelligent fellow—seems to know everybody and to have been everywhere. While at Oxford he was the guest of Dr. Bradley (Murray and Bradley, the great lexicographers)." Another "cosmopolitan old boy" got up a dinner in London at Christmas for old Shebbear boys and "I was the invited guest." There he meets "a surgeon in good practice at Nottingham,"

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND CLOSING DAYS

another from Leicester, two brothers eminent in the scientific world, and a barrister who is likely to make his mark, with a number of young fellows holding various Government appointments.

It becomes plain from his later letters that his physical strength is declining. In June, 1905, he writes: "The hot weather makes me very tired and 'all-shaky-like' as the old Shebbear women say." In August he writes to Sir Samuel Way of Mr. Bourne's death and burial: "Mr. Braund's address at the funeral was worthy of Mr. Bourne and of the speaker. A strenuous, pure and noble life—darkened by many a sorrow and ending in protracted suffering and weakness! What a mystery it all is! A few days since I read Plato's 'Crito' through again—really I have never read a Christian sermon on death and immortality that could be compared with this treatise of a 'Christian before Christ.' (Wesley used these words of Plato's master, Socrates.)" In November he says to Mr. Thorne: "Take him for all in all, he [Mr. Bourne] was the noblest man I have ever known with the single exception of your own father." Later, after reporting that one of his pupils has won a scholarship at Westminster Hospital, he adds significantly, "I work as hard as ever I did, but *get much more tired.*"

On September 12th, 1907, Mr. Ruddie writes to Sir Samuel Way: "Next week I attend the first Conference of the new Union. It is with considerable misgiving that I do so. One is getting rather old to don new garments, learn new manners, and make new friends." In this way he at first viewed the union of the Methodist New Connexion, the United Methodist Free Churches

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND CLOSING DAYS

and the Bible Christian Connexion into the present United Methodist Church, but he quickly got reconciled to the change, and saw that it would be advantageous in widening the constituency of the College as well as in the other purposes for which the union was consummated. He attended the Sheffield Conference in 1908, but had to leave through illness. He tells Sir Samuel Way :

"I could attend but one public meeting—the missionary meeting—and was suffering acutely even then, and had to leave long before it was over. But I heard Sam Pollard speak and I do not think I ever heard anything more truly apostolic—it was like James Thorne at his best, with an added youthfulness—almost boyishness—that brought out the intense earnestness and sincerity into stronger relief. We have a work to do so long as we can turn out men like Sam Pollard, prepared alike to labour, suffer, or die."

In March, 1909, he writes again and mentions the Annual Old Boys' Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant, London, which "was a great success." "Illness made it impossible for me to attend, but I am told I was not forgotten, and that one's old pupils remember their old teacher, not with fear and trembling but with affection and gratitude." The letter concludes : "My work is nearly done, but I have no patience with the pessimists that in Church and State are constantly shrieking ' Wolf ' . . . God's in His Heaven --and (spite of suffering, crime and death) All's right with the world."

He meant to die in harness, but his malady grew upon him, and after one or two breakdowns

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND CLOSING DAYS

he decided to retire at the end of the summer term of 1909, when Mr. Lark's Governorship also terminated.

His own words best express his position and views at this time as given in his last letter to Sir Samuel Way :

“August 11th, 1909.

“Dear Sir,—

“In your last letter you expressed the hope that if you visit England in 1910 you would find me hard at work. Since then my affliction has taken a more serious turn, and I was obliged at the end of the last term to resign. It is a hard wrench to be taken from work that has been my very life for above 45½ years. But it is the common lot and one must submit as gracefully as possible. It is, however, rather disheartening to fear that the few ensuing months or years will be a time of suffering. For the last three weeks the pain has been acute and almost continuous. Just now I feel a trifle better. If I could retain sufficient strength to be able to walk round the garden, and here and there pluck up a weed or prune a flower or fruit bush, I should still enjoy life. The doctor says that he hopes this will be so.

“I have been surprised and delighted with the tokens of respect and affection that meet me on every hand. The ‘old’ pupils sent me a cheque for £150 and an album of greetings which covers, I believe, the whole series of years that I have been at Shebbear. The pupils in residence made me a present of a beautiful roll-top desk, with movable chair; and the staff gave me a splendid copy of the great artwork, ‘The Gardens of Italy.’

“All this seems to show that my life here—straitened in circumstances and sometimes beset

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND CLOSING DAYS

with difficulties—has not been wasted. And it is pleasing, too, to reflect that the very pupils that have done most themselves since they left school, are the first to avow their deep acknowledgement to their old teacher. Such, for example, are the brothers Russ (Charley and Sidney) both of whom are certain to grave their names on the records of Science. Some time since I sent you a reprint of an address read before the Royal Society by Sidney Russ on Radium and the kindred elements. By this post I send you a paper read by the elder brother, Charley, before the same august assembly, and printed by them in these proceedings (a recognition of its permanent worth). Charley's 'head' was so impressed by his work that he said he believed that their researches would give a new meaning and force to Bacterial Science. The brother-in-law of these men, Frank Welch (who married a Miss Russ) took the most prominent part in the album of greetings which will be an heirloom in the family long after I am gone.

"My successor, John Rounsefell, B.A., B.Sc., is in every way a splendid fellow—one of the best preachers in Plymouth and the very best teacher. He is very quiet in manner, but behind the calm exterior there is 'a hiding of his power.' I have every confidence also in Mr. Baulkwill as Mr. Lark's successor. He is a man of boundless energy and will inspire new life and activity into every part of the College work. I have therefore every confidence in the future. Terms must be raised to meet the deficiency caused by the loss of Government grant and County Council grant. But if the school can hold its own in face of these losses it will be a great escape. Government interference in

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND CLOSING DAYS

educational matters is more capricious and inconsistent than in any other matter I know of. The fact is the men who hold the strings know nothing or next to nothing of the actual work of the schools. They are public school and University men. But for training capable secondary teachers the public schools and Universities set an excellent example of *how not to do it*. So vexatious is the clerical work they demand that it takes one man's full time to keep the books and answer their questions. From all this the school will be freed. I think it is Georges Sand that says that the worker is nothing, the work is everything.

"I think I can face the future of the school with hope. May that future be brighter and better than the past! And if in no other way I can serve the future I hope the avoidance of my mistakes will be a real help.

"Kindly excuse the egotism of this letter,—and attribute it to the pain and weakness of the writer."

His physical strength became so exhausted that few outside the members of his own family could be permitted to see him during his last illness. All, however, bear witness to his calmness and fortitude as the end approached. It came on Oct. 17th, 1909, and a few days later he was laid to rest in the chapel yard at Lake, Shebbear. There he lies beside the wife whose loss he had so long lamented, and close by the graves of James Thorne, Frederick William Bourne, and others whose memory he had cherished and whose example of integrity he had ever held up as worthy of that emulation which he had himself manifested throughout his long career as head master of Shebbear College.

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND CLOSING DAYS

Of all the tributes paid by the many friends and old pupils who assembled on that day the one that would probably have touched him most was that of the poor woman whom he had endeavoured to restore to her rightful position in the household where she had long occupied a place of dishonour. As she swept away the autumn leaves from his grave she said, with tearful eyes: "I thought I might at least do him this little service. For, oh, he was a good man!"

Browning's words have been chosen as an appropriate epitaph:

"One who never turned his back but marched
breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted,
wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."



VII.

**TRIBUTES FROM VARIOUS
SOURCES.**

LETTER FROM SIR SAMUEL WAY TO
MR. RUDDLE.

Sept. 21st, 1909.

I KNOW of no school of the size with such a record as Shebbear during your head mastership. Dr. Charles Russ has been good enough to send me his paper, read before the Royal Society, on "The Electric Reactions of Certain Bacteria." "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it!" But I am sure that when you accepted the head mastership of Shebbear it was beyond your expectation that a paper by one of your boys would be read before the Royal Society, or that any of them would reach the academic eminence of H. W. Horwill, Raab, and others too numerous to mention.

FROM SIR ROBERT WHITE-THOMSON.

Sir Samuel Way asks me whether I could send you any personal reminiscences of our late friend Mr. Ruddle. I have none but the pleasantest, though they are few, for beyond our intercourse on the three occasions of my visiting Shebbear, we only met casually in Exeter and at Okehampton when education questions brought us together. I found Mr. Ruddle invariably genial and friendly, and the opinion, which I formed of his great ability and of his influence for good with his pupils, was confirmed by what I saw at Shebbear. I have the May "Magazine" of 1894, which contains an excellent likeness of him,

TRIBUTES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

together with his humorous description of his arrival, thirty years before, at Shebbear, which was to be his "happy hunting ground" for so many years. I enclose a letter which Mr. Ruddle wrote me in 1905 after one of my pleasant visits to Shebbear. Kindly return it to me, that I may restore it to its place among my "Memorials of Shebbear."

FROM DR. WILLIAM T. TORR,

Principal of the Methodist Training Home,
Brighton, South Australia.

Thomas Ruddle of Shebbear was such a remarkable combination of parts that it is practically impossible to put him into a single picture.

I had the pleasure of being his guest on more than one occasion. He acted as my adviser when I was going to the University of Oxford, and the impression left on my mind is that of a man of an indomitable will, trenchant, kindly, sympathetic, and deeply spiritual.

Behind a somewhat uncouth manner he carried an intensity of feeling that overwhelmed one in its depths.

In speaking he was terse, epigrammatic, and, at times, eloquent.

His horror of sin, his high ideals, his wide culture, carried one out of his surroundings into an atmosphere that is as uncommon as it is intense.

How he made those Devonshire lanes ring with a stream of talk that was almost bewildering and lifted himself and his listener into a world where ordinary things looked so petty and small, and where only the spiritual was the real!

TRIBUTES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

His daring theological acumen carried one into untraversed realms of thought, but the conviction remained that loyalty to Jesus Christ was the greatest thing in the world.

He stood for truth and righteousness in a way that I have never met his like. To me he was a benediction and an inspiration.

THE REV. H. W. HORWILL, M.A.,

writing at the time of Mr. Ruddle's retirement, said :

It was once said of an American minister—Emerson's father, I think it was—that he defied all attempts at classification ; you might as well try to measure the moon for a suit of clothes. That is the kind of task confronting anyone who sets himself to describe Mr. Ruddle.

Shall we call him a schoolmaster of the old style? Not if we may trust the autobiographies of those whose boyhood was spent in the days when that style prevailed. His teaching has always been too intelligent for that, and his relation to his boys too sympathetic. "A schoolmaster," says Walter Bagehot, "should have an atmosphere of awe, and walk wonderingly, as if he was amazed at being himself." That is scarcely Mr. Ruddle's habitual gait. Once, indeed, he was brought up to the school, from his house in the village, in a state chariot [built by the boys and drawn by them], but this unwonted grandeur was so distasteful that the experiment broke down on the second day, as did the chariot.

Then shall we number him among the moderns? The question recalls to me a visit I paid to Harrow one afternoon when the host

TRIBUTES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

of our party was the late Edward Bowen. Now, as far as my observation goes, Thomas Ruddell has always resembled Edward Bowen in his indifference to the refinements of the educational expert. Not that he has been ignorant of what advanced science—psychology and the rest of it—has had to say about school methods, for that is a subject about which he knows a thing or two. Nor is it that he has any quarrel with the modern ways, or deems them mistaken. They are not his way, that is all.

So we are driven to the conclusion, inexplicable to strangers, but quite adequate for his friends, that the secret of Mr. Ruddell's career lies in his personality. It is seldom that the individual influence of a schoolmaster makes itself as powerfully felt and as distinctly recognized as in this instance. Ordinarily, it is not in boyhood, but in the period just following that a man is conscious of the development of his own powers under the stimulus or guidance of someone to whom he looks up as to an intellectual or spiritual leader. Somehow, one thinks of Mr. Ruddell as not only an intellectual, but a spiritual force. That force has, perhaps, been especially effective because it has not been applied in any official or organized fashion.

Further, Mr. Ruddell's own religious belief has been worth all the more to his pupils because it was not cheaply acquired. It was by no smooth and easy road that he reached the faith wherein he stands, and it has meant not a little to some of us, in the struggles of early manhood, to remember that he, too, had fought the same battle with the spectres of darkness before coming out into the light.

TRIBUTES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

In 1908

THE REV. S. POLLARD,

missionary from Yunnan, and an "Old Boy," distributed the prizes at Shebbear College.

In his address, Mr. Pollard spoke of himself as an "Old Boy." He said that the lessons he had learned when a boy at Shebbear, had many times, when acted upon, saved his life in China. He had learned not to run away from trouble, but to go straight at it, and often it would disappear. Some people said that missionaries were fools and namby-pambies; and when boys went out into the world they would meet men who doubted Christianity, the Bible, and Jesus Christ. It would be, he continued, an immense advantage to remember that they knew someone who really believed in Jesus Christ [as Mr. Ruddie did].

ANOTHER OLD BOY

says, in writing to the "College Magazine" of his own school days:

After the new buildings were taken into use there was a big influx of the "young men," as the ministerial candidates were termed. Men whose names are now almost "household words" in the Connexion, were there at that time—Lane, Rowe, Baulkwill, Ellis, Stedeford, Pascoe, Eva, Roach, and many others, were there for training. The duty of preaching at Lake Chapel was one not always appreciated by these candidates—schoolboys are nothing if not critical, and criticism would fall flat if not conveyed personally to the criticized. There was always, however, the pleasure of going to the chapel to be looked forward to, and the most severe critic

TRIBUTES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

could be silenced by an invitation to accompany the candidate on his next Sunday out. That was a treat to which we all looked forward.

There was no doubt that the presence of these "young men" raised the moral and religious tone of the place to such a level that impressions received then were never lost. Everyone who spent any time under Mr. Gammon's governorship will remember the whole-hearted way in which he performed his duties; nothing was too small for his attention, and College and pupils all benefited by his devotion to his work.

Unlike the governorship, the head mastership has not been a passing appointment, and many hundreds, and even thousands, of boys—men now, many of them, have to bless the day they first came under Mr. Ruddell's tuition. His name will live as long as the College remains.

A WRITER IN THE "CHRISTIAN WORLD," who also quotes from the Rev. C. G. Hawken, says of him:

It was not until the late seventies that Mr. Ruddell added to his secular teaching the conduct of a Sunday Bible Class and an occasional appearance in the pulpit. As a preacher he was unconventional and stimulating. The independence of his thinking and the pungency of his expression gave his sermons a character of their own. But he was always more at home as a writer than as a speaker. There was a "distinction" in his style, as anyone must recognize who has read his articles, especially those dealing with literary subjects, in "The Bible Christian Magazine." "Often suspected by the ultra-evangelical and the unco' guid;

TRIBUTES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

more and more possessing the highest confidence of the Conference and winning the love of his pupils; a disciple of Darwin while fathers of his scholars were denouncing evolution as of the Devil, but trusting their boys nevertheless to his care; often extravagant of speech, yet deeply reverent in spirit; ever pursuing the highest ideals of character and of his own work—Thomas Ruddle has sat at the head master's desk at Shebbear, making it a centre of light and moral health to boys who have gone out to the ends of the earth. The spectrum of those rays reveals a faith in God sane, devout, and devoid of cant, and free from a cast-iron creed; a great love for the Bible, his mother tongue and its literature; a gospel of laughter; belief in and hope for mankind; a passion for righteousness, individual and national; and a tender love that no brusquerie could conceal."

To these may be added one or two tributes of another kind, which go to show how difficult it is for a prophet to receive honour in his own country, especially if he has the catholicity that was characteristic of Mr. Ruddle.

Preaching at Holsworthy soon after the death of Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Ruddle, in the course of his sermon, said that when he died he hoped to go to heaven, and when he got there he was sure of meeting two good men, viz., William Ewart Gladstone and Cardinal Newman. This statement gave rise to some commotion, the older members believing Mr. Ruddle was becoming a Roman Catholic. ["Western Times."]

On another occasion Mr. Ruddle, preaching in the chapel on the Education question, deprecated

TRIBUTES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

the agitation against religious instruction being given in day schools. He told his congregation that their own children bore evidence of the necessity of such instruction. "I went (said Mr. Ruddle) into your Sunday School and asked the children how many commandments there were. The answers astounded me ; they varied from one to fifty. Surely your children want religious education. On the other hand, you ask a child taught by the Church the same question, and it has no hesitation in answering 'Ten.'" After the service was over a very old member of the congregation was so indignant at such "heresy" that he said "it was a shame to allow such a man to enter the pulpit ; he preached neither the law nor the Gospel." [Quoted from the "Western Times."]

At another time, after he had been preaching one of his inimitable sermons on Balaam, at Providence Chapel, Exeter, a good old Devonian was heard to exclaim in the lobby: "Is the preacher 'mazed' [mad]?" "No," was the reply, "but he has been preaching to a 'mazed' people."

REV. THOMAS BRAUND.

At the funeral of Mr. Ruddle, the Rev. Thomas Braund and the Rev. W. B. Reed were the chief speakers. Mr. Braund said :

How great was his influence with the young people ! What was the secret ? One great secret was that he kept young himself. All through life he carried a young heart with him. He (the speaker) was talking a day or two ago to a youth who was at Shebbear for several years, and he said to the youth, "What was it in Mr. Ruddle

TRIBUTES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

that impressed you most?" The youth paused, hesitated a little, and at last, with deep emotion and a tear in his voice, he said: "Oh, he did love us boys." That was probably one of the chief secrets of his great success, and of the wonderful influence he had with all sorts of boys in the school. This youth said: "There was no partiality with Mr. Ruddle. He was just and fair to every one of us." Then there were such brightness in Mr. Ruddle, such cheeriness, such a genuineness to the heart's core. It was not merely knowledge that he communicated; it was the remarkable way in which he developed and drew out what was best in the boys. It was his insistence upon habits of accuracy and thoroughness, and his life and character were always an inspiration to honesty and truthfulness and purity of life.

REV. W. B. REED.

Mr. Reed spoke of Mr. Ruddle as "a famous head master." He was immured in that part to do that work, and yet his reputation had gone out to the ends of the earth. If there was one word that expressed his character it was that he was a man—a manly man, genial, able, healthful, loving. He was a king among his fellows. He was crowned while yet he lived with the affection and homage and devotion of all who surrounded him—a real man. His scholars would say of him that he never did a mean thing, and never spoke an insincere word. He could ever be relied upon as a man thoroughly honest and true. He abhorred all shams and unrealities, and set his face sternly against everything that was not strictly honourable and true. Besides his work as a teacher, Mr. Ruddle was a preacher,

TRIBUTES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

and, while diligently talking all the week, almost every Sunday he was engaged in the pulpit. But he never spoke too long or too often. His speeches, his sermons, his lectures, his talks were remembered and treasured long years after they were spoken. But, better than all, Mr. Ruddle was a Christian. His mind was singularly alert. He never got "stogged," to use a Devonshire term : he was always awake. He was broad in all his views, and yet single-minded. He was many-sided, and yet he had but one aim, and that aim was the truth. It did not matter where or in whom, but he sought diligently for the truth. It was meet that his remains should rest where his work was wrought. Pilgrims would come there from year to year and shed a tear over the place where he lay, and they would say : "He taught me how to learn ; he taught me how to live." May his mantle rest on all those who had the benefit of his instruction and upon his family !

LETTER FROM SIR SAMUEL WAY TO MRS. ASHELFORD.

Montefiore, North Adelaide,
30th November, 1900.

Dear Mrs. Ashelford,

I am grateful to you for your letter of the 25th October, giving me the account of your dear father's illness and death, and I appreciate your kindness all the more as your letter was written under the pressure, not only of grief, but of the many calls upon your time immediately after the end.

I received two letters from your father this year : one dated March 22nd and the other August

TRIBUTES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

11th. In both he wrote in an optimistic way as to the future and as to the College.

He says, finally, "I think I can face the future of the school with hope. May that future be brighter and better than the past. And if in no other way I can serve the future I hope the avoidance of my mistakes will be a real help."

Neither letter shows any sign of failing mental power, and the handwriting of both is as firm as ever. But news from other correspondents had led me to recognize that he was not likely to live much longer. I hoped he would receive my letter of September 21st, as I knew it would give him pleasure if he saw it.

Still, we cannot help feeling grateful that he is "mercifully released from his sufferings." His work on earth was accomplished. It must be a melancholy satisfaction to you as a family that you all saw him during his last illness, and witnessed the demonstrations of esteem and affection at the funeral and in the press. Your own was the additional privilege of ministering to him to the end, and that you were with him, and he was conscious of your help, at the very last.

Your father has left you a magnificent inheritance in his example, and in the inspirations of a noble career. As Mr. Luke says in his letter to me, "they"—referring to the newspaper cuttings he sent—"show what a deep impression our old friend has made on the general public—an impression scarcely paralleled, I should think, by any head master outside the circle of nationally important schools." I need not tell you of the affection in which he was held by his old scholars in Australia, as well as by those in America and in other parts of the world.

TRIBUTES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

I first made your father's acquaintance in my visit to England in 1869. Again I met him, and we crossed the Atlantic and attended the Œcumenical together in 1891, and I saw him a good many times when I was in England in 1897. For a good many years we have been correspondents, and my affection and admiration for him have grown year by year. Any letters I have from him will be at the service of the writer of his Memoir.

FROM REV. J. B. STEDEFORD.

This is not the first time I have approached the task of writing, but when I sat down and faced the fact that your father was no longer here I seemed dumb! Our friendship has lasted now for many years, and during the later years I seemed more drawn to him than ever. He was one of the few to whom one could open his mind in utter confidence. He was a unique friend to me. No one else can fill just the same place, and life is much poorer for his passing.

FROM MR. F. C. LUKE.

Amid the crowd of reminiscences which come to me at such a time as this, one of the most vivid is that which I retain of his bearing when your mother died. I remember her, and I also recall the days which followed her death, when your father had to go on with his regular tasks in the midst of the bustle and difficulties of school life. The thought of his pathetic figure at that time comes to me now, and he has carried his burden in that respect as in many other ways, through this long vale of years, with a courage and hope-

TRIBUTES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

fulness which have not been lost on those who have been round him.

The work he did for us all at school is a story which has often been told, and will never be forgotten. Like Dr. Arnold of Rugby, he is interwoven with the history of Shebbear College, and for many years there will be pilgrims to that place who will tell of the inspiration your father's life and work have been to them.

The seed he scattered has grown up in all parts of the earth, and it may be that even here, in the comparatively alien soil of Ireland, I am not the only one who feels that much of what is best in him is due to your father's wise sowing.

FROM REV. J. LUKE.

I should like in a word to convey to you, and the members of your family, my sincerest sympathy at the loss of one of the truest and sincerest men I have ever known.

I was never at the College, but I was brought into close contact with your father for several years, and hold him in the highest esteem. After a long and strenuous day, he is at rest with God.

FROM MRS. W. B. REED.

I remember when he came to Shebbear, and the first Sunday he sat with the boys in Lake Chapel. My dear father and mother were delighted when he was appointed head master and many were the chats they had with him on their way from chapel and in the home. I do not think my dear father regarded any one as he did Mr. Ruddle, who stood apart from other men and soared above them in so many of the high qualities of mind and heart. To my brothers he was just The

TRIBUTES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

Master, respected, admired, loved. And because of the love his influence was great and compelling, moulding and directing to high and noble purposes !

FROM MR. HUGHES HORWILL.

To many of us, Shebbear merely spelt "Ruddle," and my happiest memories of the four years I spent there are inseparable from the inspiration of Mr. Ruddle's life and example.

FROM REV. W. B. REED.

On what a striking and epoch-making personality the curtain has fallen ! How much poorer one feels to-day !

It was ever to me a matter of satisfaction and encouragement to know that in Mr. Ruddle I had a friend in whom I could always confide, and with whom it was my fortune to find myself so often in agreement when there were wide diversities of opinion.



Margaret Ruddle.

VIII.

MARGARET RUDDLE.



NO account of the life of Thomas Ruddle would be complete which omitted to note the influence exercised upon him by his wife, to whom he was united in marriage on the 20th of June, 1871.

She was one of the Allins of Sutcombe, a village six miles from Holsworthy and about eight miles from Shebbear. Of the family and their work in connection with the Bible Christian Denomination Mr. Ruddle himself says, when writing in the year 1895: "From the infancy of the denomination the Allins of Sutcombe have been among its best friends and supporters, and many of them are already numbered among the pious dead." Of one of them he further states: "He was converted nearly forty years ago at a District Meeting held in the Old Chapel at Sutcombe Mill, which those who were privileged to attend have never forgotten and can never forget. A morning prayer-meeting developed into a day of unbroken praise and supplication. There was a wonderful manifestation of the Divine presence. Many were converted; and nearly all have already died in the faith, or still hold fast to the profession then first made. Among those who have since passed away was my own dear wife."

Margaret Allin, whose musical voice first brought her to his notice as he heard her singing in one of the chapels in the Shebbear Circuit, was the granddaughter, on her mother's side, of the William and Margaret Allin mentioned in the Memoir which Mr. Ruddle himself wrote in the year 1878. The tribute there borne brings out

MARGARET RUDDLE

those qualities of character and disposition which attracted him in the wife of his choice, for Margaret Ruddle had all the strength of character of her ancestry with that gentleness and kindness of disposition which caused her to be almost idolized by her husband and children as she was beloved by all her friends.

The Allins were a musical family. Mrs. Ruddle's father, Mr. Daniel Allin, of Hawkwill, in the parish of Sutcombe, was himself a singer possessed of a rich and powerful bass voice and a musical taste which did much to make the Sutcombe choir the most efficient in the neighbourhood and to raise the standard throughout the entire district.

Mr. Ruddle's estimate of his wife's grandparents may be quoted as evidence of his recognition of the value of that influence which the ministry of the old Bible Christian Church had upon the North of Devon generally. This is corroborated by the testimony of the late Sir Thomas Dyke Acland and others who had opportunity of judging the worth of the men who owed the best that was in them to the work of Wm. O'Bryan and the greatest of his coadjutors, James Thorne. Mr. Ruddle says in the "Bible Christian Magazine" for May, 1878 :

"For more than forty years Mr. and Mrs. William Allin were regarded as the spiritual parents of the society at Sutcombe, one of the most united, kindly and generous societies in the Connexion. Never was reputation better deserved. During all that time they were patterns in every-day life of almost every virtue that ennobles men or adorns the religion of Jesus Christ. Mr. Allin was naturally of a

fiery and impetuous temperament; but early conversion, followed by a life of earnest piety, prevented this from becoming a snare, whilst his stability was in no faint degree like that of the Eternal Rock on which it reposed. Mrs. Allin was one of the most gentle and unassuming of women. Prudent, kind-hearted, tender, and devoted, from the first day I knew her till she was taken away I looked upon her as a beautiful example of the influence of the Gospel upon a disposition naturally sweet and amiable. I was one day walking in a garden with her granddaughter [Mrs. Ruddle]. Suddenly she stopped, and said, 'Look; grandma would never have passed that weed without plucking it up.' It was telling the story of a life. Mrs. Allin never looked upon goodness in any shape without some kindly recognition of it; and when she encountered evil, and saw the least prospect of success, she endeavoured in her gentle way to eradicate it. Her life was a proof that religion is not only calculated to make its possessor useful and happy, but that a daily imitation of the example of Jesus is more efficient than all the culture and refinement in the world in imparting that delicacy of tone and feeling which is termed 'ladylike,' and which so many covet and so few possess.

"When first converted Mr. Allin, then a mere lad, had to battle with a little world in arms against him. The unkindest blows were dealt by his nearest friends. Father and brothers derided and persecuted him; his very mother sided with the oppressors. 'My father,' said he to me, 'attributed my conversion to idleness, and worked me harder than the rest.'

"With untiring energy the lad toiled at the hardest work of the farm from morning till

night, resolved to undeceive his friends and neighbours who believed 'conversion among the Methodists' was synonymous with lounging idleness. The unanimous testimony of all I have consulted on this question is, that they never knew his equal in this work. Wise in speech and wise in silence, he always seemed to say the right thing at the right moment, and never to mar it with what was inopportune and indiscreet. He was always present with his class, always in good time. Absent members were called on, faulty ones reproved, feeble ones encouraged, and thus a society was kept together at Sutcombe more united and harmonious perhaps than any other in a wide district. The loss of such a man is often disastrous to a neighbourhood; it was feared it might be at Sutcombe. The sons-in-law of the deceased are, however, persevering in his work with a zeal not unworthy of the tradition of their house.

"This society was the crown of Mr. Allin's rejoicing: his first care in life, his latest care in death. Among its members were numbered most of the brothers who had at first opposed him, their wives, their children, and their children's children. Of these brothers one, Thomas, seems to have been unusually wild and careless; nor did his conversion take place till long after William had chosen his path in life. Few conversions have been more thorough. When I knew him, Mr. Thomas Allin was, so far as I am able to judge, regarding alike his physical development, private and public character, temper and disposition, and deep though unobtrusive piety, one of the very noblest specimens of Christian Englishmen I ever met.

MARGARET RUDDLE

“William Allin continued to lead his class until his ‘sickness unto death.’ A little before death Mr. Braund asked him if he had any message to the society he had so long cared for. He paused and said: ‘Holiness becometh the people of God. The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. Nothing short of this is safe.’ Could the departing spirit have breathed a more sacred message to the churches?”

Mrs. Ruddle was not physically strong, and on more than one occasion was seized with illness which wellnigh proved fatal. Such experiences were a terrible ordeal to her husband, but she never flinched in the time of extremity, and when he once asked her, as she seemed to triumph at her approaching translation, what was to become of him and the children, her immediate response was, “I leave you with Christ.” Weak as she was, she sang in clear tones Watts’s great paraphrase:

“I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath,
And when my voice is lost in death
Praise shall employ my nobler powers:
My days of praise shall ne’er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.”

From this illness she made a wonderful recovery, but her final testimony, as recorded in the pathetic letter written by her broken-hearted husband nearly twenty years later, was quite in accord with the life she had lived and the faith she had always manifested.

The eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ruddle died in infancy, but three sons and three daughters were brought up in the home at Shebbear to

MARGARET RUDDLE

witness the devotion which grew in intensity as the years passed, until, after various threatenings, the great separation came on April 8th, 1892. A letter to his friend, the Rev. John Thorne, given at the end of this chapter, will best indicate his sense of the great loss he then sustained.

For seventeen years Mr. Ruddle was left without the support he so sorely needed. His wife, in whose sound sense and cool judgement he had absolutely confided, had been to him a pillar of strength. In the administration of his private affairs he especially needed the guidance and counsel of one so true to him. His love of abstract reasoning and his ready and complete absorption in the close and continuous reading to which he gave himself, unfitted him in many respects for that attention to what are sometimes too lightly regarded as the petty details of life.

Fortunately, his eldest daughter, Lily, was able in some measure to lighten the burden which would otherwise have fallen upon him. For nine years she bravely stood by her father in the home, caring for him and for her younger brothers and sisters with a fidelity and devotion which showed her to be a true child of one of the best of mothers. Not until another daughter was able to take her place did she resign her post in the home of her birth to become the wife of the Rev. Charles A. Ashelford, one of her father's esteemed pupils.

Through her kindness it is possible to add the testimony of some of those who knew her mother personally.

One of the old boys, now a Congregational minister, writes :

"Very precious to me is the memory of Mrs. Ruddle's sweet and Christ-like character. As

MARGARET RUDDLE

a bright mirror she reflected the face and life of the meek and lowly Saviour. Her memory will ever be to me one of the unanswerable arguments, one of the evidences that no reasoning can destroy. May God help us to be what she was—a reflector of the glory of the life full of grace and truth. What a grand thing it is to be able to say of a loved friend that her presence rebuked every evil thought, that her example was a daily incentive to the service of Christ, and that her memory silences our every doubt. I was permitted probably to know her better than many of my school comrades. Many happy hours have I spent under your roof. When preparing for some examination, she would ever encourage me by word and smile. To-day there come back to me memories of days when your dear wife was ill, memories of your sad and anxious face. One night especially can I remember, when the doctor had been summoned hastily and the life seemed to be ebbing away. That was the first time that it dawned upon me how much she was to you. Boy-like I had thought you to be strong enough to stand alone needing but little sympathy and help. That night I learned part of the secret of your strength.”

Writing to Mr. Thorne on April 14th, 1892, Mr. Ruddle says :

“After long and very painful affliction my dear wife passed from death unto life on Friday last (the 8th) at 5 o'clock p.m. For the year immediately before her death she was confined to her bed, with the exception of five weeks. Since Christmas her sufferings have been very severe and continuous ; but she bore them with heroic fortitude. She died as she had lived—

—true, brave, trustful, and humble. She did not talk often nor much of the future, her last hours being spent in commending the children to my care, and in making suggestions for their welfare. But when she did speak it was with no uncertain voice. As her father and I were standing at her bedside, her voice almost gone, she suddenly said firmly and distinctly, ‘Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, *for Thou art with me,*’ throwing a strong emphasis on the last clause. It is well with her, but it leaves me heart-broken.

“You well know how deeply she revered the memory of your own departed father and mother; how she honoured and respected yourself and your sisters; and how she longed at all times, first of all, to win her family for Christ, and, secondly, to secure their sympathy and support for the denomination among whom she was born, and that she loved so well.

“To me the hour is one of intense bitterness—a bitterness more painful than death itself.

“‘Thrice blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell
That God is on the field, when He
Is most invisible.’

“It were profane at such an hour to talk or think of anything but her. She lies in the chapel-yard among the sainted dead. ‘Tis weary waiting, waiting to be with her again.

“In the hours since Friday last I have often gone over my life again, and seen your father and yourself many times. I thank God that I was ever led to Shebbear, and not least that my residence here led to the sacred tie so rudely broken.”

MARGARET RUDDLE

LETTERS RECEIVED BY MR. RUDDLE ON ON THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

FROM RT. HON. GEORGE LAMBERT.

Let me express my most sincere sympathy with your family and yourself, in the great loss you have sustained through the death of your dear wife.

The slightest acquaintance would make one appreciate Mrs. Ruddle's many good and amiable qualities, which makes your bereavement doubly severe.

FROM MR. JOHN ROUNSEFELL, B.A., B.Sc.

I have no fear for you in this darkness of trouble, for, after living seven years in your company, your faith, in my sight, was always unwavering and your courage always serene, and I know they will not, cannot, desert you when the time of urgent need is present.

Words of cheer and consolation such as would greatly help and sustain you I know I am unable to give, because I have never passed through such deep waters as you are passing through; but if a fellow-being's sorrow is any consolation, if his sympathy is of any service, mine you have from the bottom of my heart, and they go out to you, at this time especially, in a deeper tide of love than before, as to one to whom I owe a great part of myself.

FROM MRS. WINFIELD.

My husband and I have been deeply affected by your letter this morning. We feel for you and your dear ones more than we can say. At a time like this, words are unavailing except in so much as they tell of the sympathy of friends—and of

MARGARET RUDDLE

human sympathy you will have no ordinary share, for you and your loved one were so widely known and esteemed. We, who have had the privilege of knowing something of your domestic life, can understand what your words "I am heart-broken" mean. There seems no earthly comfort but the thought that the pain and suffering of weary months are ended, and that the dear, patient one has gone to the rest—or whatever is best of happiness—in the life beyond.

Last night (before we heard your sad news) I dreamt that I saw dear Mrs. Ruddle, and that she looked quite young and girlish, with no trace of pain or illness to be seen on her bright, youthful face. Perhaps the dream had some relation to her as she really is now.

FROM DR. JOHN M. GOVER.

I have wholly pleasing memories of Mrs. Ruddle's never-failing kindness and courtesy, both when I was a schoolboy and more recently. It was not, however, till I saw you last that I realized how heroically she was bearing up against such great physical pain and trouble.

Accept my heartfelt sympathy in what must be your infinite sadness.

FROM REV. W. B. REED.

Your dear wife has been a noble woman, and to have had her companionship and love, her fortitude and exceeding good judgement and sense for all these years is sufficient to permanently enrich your life. By her help, in great measure, you have already fulfilled a life's service sufficient for the ambition of most men, and the recompense of it all is surely coming. Our one regret is, that she will not be present to share in it.

IX.

**“TOMMY,” AS HIS BOYS
SAW HIM.**



FEW leaders of men or boys escape a nickname, though it is not the lot of all to find one which has in it the ring of affection.

The pet name of a mother for her son is probably the most significant of the love which is not unaccompanied by the most candid criticism of the object of it. Such was the title universally adopted by successive generations of schoolboys at Shebbear and, lacking in respect as it might appear to the supercilious, it indicated a free-and-easy regard for their head master which exactly corresponded to his frank and open intercourse with them when he could for a time lay aside the reserve due to his position. His was no majesty that dwelt apart from those whose best interests he lived to serve. He kept a discreetly blind eye towards some of the follies that went on around him, but no man was quicker to see those that bordered on grossness, or sterner in his denunciation or punishment of acts which tended to vice or were subversive of discipline. There was no undue presumption, therefore, in his presence and no toleration of disrespect in his absence when upon occasion one of the meaner spirits would forget himself in the presence of his schoolfellows.

"What is the fuss about down there?" he once asked from the far end of the schoolroom.

"This fellow has written something mean about yourself, sir," said an impulsive senior whose indignation had been roused.

"Oh! if that is all, let him be. He is probably ashamed of it by this time," was the reply; and the lad was more cowed than if he had been

"TOMMY," AS HIS BOYS SAW HIM

thrashed. Such freedom from pettiness was bound to win regard.

"Is Tommy up there?" shouted a youngster as he ran up the schoolroom steps, with an Irishman's obtuseness to the folly of such a means of investigation. Thereupon he entered the schoolroom and found the head master seated at his desk. The few boys in the room at the time expected a scene, whilst the teeth of the boy, who well knew that his shout must have been heard, began to chatter in his head. Eagerly they all watched to see if any notice would be taken, but the head continued his reading with just the suspicion of an amused smile playing round his mouth.

Gradually the boys withdrew. "He heard you right enough," was the general remark when they got outside.

"Aye, but he took no notice. Wasn't I frightened though! He's a brick is Tommy."

"I would as soon take his word as that of an angel; in fact, I would rather believe him," he said of an absent pupil one day before a class of senior boys. There was some squirming at such a startling and apparently extravagant statement and a good many side-glances and wry faces. No doubt the boys had good reason to know that the subject of such an unexpected eulogy was not the saint that the chief seemed to think him. Some modification was surely necessary, and it presently came. "The truth is, that, if I saw an angel I should have no evidence as to whether he was an angel of light or an angel of darkness, and that would make all the

"TOMMY," AS HIS BOYS SAW HIM

difference." The story was told in due course to the absentee, upon whom it made the same impression as the confidence of Dr. Arnold in the veracity of his pupils. "It is a shame to tell Arnold a lie, for he always believes one."

There can be no doubt that Mr. Ruddell's attitude, towards his senior boys especially, had the effect of drawing out the best that was in them.

One other instance of this may be given. "Bob," he said one day to a senior, "I have heard something (naming what) about you, which if it were true would be exceedingly unpleasant. Is it true?"

"No, sir!" was the reply.

"Then that is all right. Good morning."

"But, sir, I can prove it."

"You have done that already, Bob. Good morning."

On one occasion several of his pupils were about to enter for the Oxford Local Examination at Launceston. "What a funny little fellow your head master is!" said a candidate from another school, who was watching the by-play and fun with which the chief was endeavouring to keep up the spirits of the boys, who were in most instances quite new to an ordeal of this kind. This provoked the indignation of the older students who quickly resented a remark which seemed to indicate contempt on the part of the speaker. "Wait until you see the result of this examination," they said, "and then you will know better what sort of a man our head master is!" High positions in First and Second Class Honours justified the boys' confidence in the prowess of their teacher.

"TOMMY," AS HIS BOYS SAW HIM

It was at one of these public examinations that advantage taken by one of the candidates brought down upon the whole number the stern rebuke of the presiding examiner, who, of course, did not know the guilty party. Knowing that the rebuke was deserved, the Shebbear candidates felt their position with regard to the honour of their school very acutely. The head master had always been very strict with regard to his own school examinations, and would never condone any attempt to use unfair means. He would always speak in the most scathing terms of anyone who so degraded himself as to pretend that he had done work which was not really his own. They therefore felt that in justice to their school, their head master, and themselves, some representation should be made to the examiner which should, if necessary, remove from his mind any impression that some Shebbear boy had been guilty of the act in question. One of their number was therefore deputed to meet the examiner upon the next day as he was on his way to the examination hall, and to tell him their position. "I never for one moment suspected any Shebbear boy," he replied, "for since I have been a presiding examiner I have been struck with the honourable way in which they always act. In fact, I told a clerical friend of mine, who has recently been criticising the Bible Christians in the public press (alluding to a recent controversy of the time) that I only wished there were more boys like those I saw from year to year representing Shebbear College in the Local Examinations."

Nothing more was needed where such confidence existed, nor was anyone else in any way compromised. The examiner afterwards became

"TOMMY," AS HIS BOYS SAW HIM

a Canon of Truro Cathedral, and up to the time of his death entertained a high esteem for that section of the Christian Church to which the College belonged.

On one occasion it was discovered that certain fellows of the baser sort had been making use of bad language, and the matter was brought before the whole school. "Swearing and foul language," said the head master, "is a crime that brings no advantage whatever, not even an imaginary one. If a man steals a leg of mutton he has at least the benefit of the mutton he has stolen, and if he was really hungry there is some excuse for him, though his crime is none the less grave. But when a man or boy indulges in foul language he is simply corrupting others without conferring even an imaginary benefit upon himself."

This was a common-sense view of the subject which impressed his hearers much more effectively than some severe homily reminding them of the terrors of the Judgement Day.

He was possessed of a large fund of the saving salt of humour. This, of itself, was sufficient to put him on good terms with his pupils, and there can be no doubt that the gift is one which stands in good stead to every teacher. Goldsmith has, however, noted one sinister result which sometimes arises from a redundancy of this quality :

"Full well they laughed, with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes ; for many a joke had he."

The fact is that the same humorous illustrations

"TOMMY," AS HIS BOYS SAW HIM

are made to do duty for successive generations of schoolboys. In a school where many of the boys remain for several years there are sure to be some who hear the same jokes repeated again and again. One morning the suggestion was made that none of them should laugh at any of the head master's jokes which the more experienced members of his class well knew to be forthcoming in connection with one of the lessons. A contract was made, and as the time-honoured chestnuts appeared they were studiously ignored. The result was that all the life was taken out of the lesson and a feeling of conscious strain was produced on both sides which became so painful that the experiment was never again repeated.

With a chuckle of delight he would often tell the story against himself of the boy whose head he once tapped, saying as he did so, "My lad, that head of yours rings so, that I fancy it must be hollow."

"Doesn't yours ring, sir?" was the reply.

"Certainly not," answered the head.

"Then that must surely be because it's cracked!" said young impudence.

A retort of this kind, which might have prejudiced the mind of a weaker man against the framer of it, simply excited in Mr. Ruddle an admiration for the quick-wittedness, which he well knew would be of highest service when more serious mental effort was required. Whilst a certain amount of freedom of speech, and even of repartee, was thus allowed, any tendency to disrespect was immediately checked.

"TOMMY," AS HIS BOYS SAW HIM

His regard for true womanhood was of the highest, fostered as it was by his devotion to the wife of his choice, and by his admiration of the heroines of Shakespeare, upon whose characters he would dwell in such a way as to produce a lifelong impression upon his students.

Occasionally he would deviate into an almost extravagant eulogy of some living girl or woman known to his hearers, who perhaps had formed their own opinion, not necessarily a fair one, upon the subject of his commendation.

In one instance one of his seniors came near incurring his serious displeasure on this account. After listening to a panegyric of more than usual warmth the irreverent youth ventured to remark that the lady in question would soon

"Crack her outer shell of sin
And hatch herself a cherubim."

"I think, Simpson, that you might certainly keep your ribaldry for a more appropriate occasion," was the reply, uttered in the most scathing tones. There was little doubt, however, among the seniors that Simpson's shaft had gone home, but there was not the slightest evidence of any permanent annoyance.

His moral indignation was sometimes a fearful thing to witness, and was perhaps one of the most impressive features of his character. It would suddenly assert itself during a history lesson, or in the Sunday afternoon Bible Class which he conducted, or in one of his sermons, or with even greater probability upon the political platform. In a school, as in society, some perverse moral natures are sure to manifest themselves, of the type of those who either thought-

"TOMMY," AS HIS BOYS SAW HIM

lessly or wilfully corrupt their fellows. It came to Mr. Ruddle's knowledge that certain grave abuses were becoming rife among one set of boys in the school. Narrowing his enquiry down to the most restricted limits, so that not even by suggestion might the matter become public property in the school, he dealt boldly and sincerely with the whole question. Privately calling together the set concerned he pointed out to them the iniquity of any course which tended to corrupt themselves and the ten-fold iniquity of any attempt to corrupt others. Having resolutely done his duty, not without considerable hesitation and difficulty, but with the utmost fidelity, he made himself one with them in one of those quiet but fervent supplications for the grace to overcome all kinds of temptation which were calculated to make even the most sceptical believe in the nobility, as well as in the efficacy of prayer.

Dealing with a number of boys who came from religious homes, he was always on his guard against anything which savoured of priggishness or pietism. If any "goody-goody" expressions or sentiments turned up in an essay or in a set of answers to an examination paper in Scripture the vials of his wrath would be quickly outpoured. "This is to teach us the lesson that God always helps us if we have faith," the callow youth would say. "Nonsense! man. God knows that it is infinitely better for you not to have help whenever you whine for it, and therefore He helps those who help themselves." Not long after the same youth would hear his chief refer with approval to Dr. Arnold's advice to his pupils that they should have faith even for

"TOMMY," AS HIS BOYS SAW HIM

a Latin exercise, and he probably wondered where the consistency came in. "Eh! mon," as the Scotchman might say, "but 'twas grand training."

The late Lord Beaconsfield was Mr. Ruddell's pet aversion among the statesmen of his day, and he was not careful to hide his dislike. At the time of the Russo-Turkish War and in the subsequent periods of that statesman's supremacy Mr. Ruddell's criticism of him was decidedly frank. He regarded him as a political charlatan and did not hesitate to express his mind freely upon his policy. A geographical lesson upon the partition of the Balkan Peninsula or a scientific frontier for India would almost certainly give rise to some comment hastily made and couched in language which might often be regarded as more forcible than prudent. During one of the school examinations he gave among the subjects for an English essay, "The life of an eminent English statesman." One of his pupils, either from a desire to curry favour with his examiner or to indulge his own satirical vein, chose as his subject "The Earl of Beaconsfield." In the course of his essay he contrived to introduce all the adverse criticism which he had imbibed in class and to reproduce it as nearly as possible in the same phraseology. The result was an extravaganza so pronounced that the head master himself suffered considerably as he beheld the caricature thus presented to him. "What on earth has possessed you to write such an essay as this?" he asked.

"Please, sir," was the reply, "I thought you would like it."

"TOMMY," AS HIS BOYS SAW HIM

The pill had to be swallowed, but it was none the less distasteful, and no doubt it had a chastening influence.

This was not the only instance, however, in which a mirror was held up wherein the head master might see reflected a more or less distorted image of himself. It is a tribute to his good sense that he never showed any signs of resentment, but always treated the matter good-humouredly.

But let some of the Old Boys speak for themselves as they did in the album which they presented to him with a cheque of over £150 at the time of his retirement at Midsummer, 1909. Mr. Tom Ruddle, his eldest son, has kindly supplied the following selections :

GREETINGS FROM THE OLD BOYS' ALBUM PRESENTED TO MR. RUDDLE IN 1909.

"Mercy and Truth thy portion be
To carnal minds unknown,
The hidden manna and the tree
Of life, and the white stone

"WM. THORNE (one of the first 'Shebbear Boys'), Queensland. 1840.

"Though not an old pupil, yet as a friend and an old Shebbear boy I have watched with admiration and affection the way in which for so many years you have upheld the high character of our beloved school. Grieved beyond measure to hear of your illness.

"EDWIN MOXLEY, Bristol. 1857."

"TOMMY," AS HIS BOYS SAW HIM

"All honour, noble Warrior! Setting small value on creeds, dogmas and shibboleths in general, you have with rarest insight known and felt the Will of God concerning us, and laboured as few men can for the coming of His Kingdom.

"JAMES CLAPP, Cricklewood, N.W. 1859."

"Respect, love and veneration mingle in a feeling too deep for words. To a noble and self-sacrificing life has been added the charm of a beautiful nature and a rare genius.

"J. RAYMONT, South Australia. 1867."

"I cannot wish you anything better than a peaceful eventide. During my fourteen years with you as pupil and master I have had nothing but kindness and consideration from you.

"WELLINGTON CLARKE, Shebbear. 1868."

"The men (like yourself) who make the deepest notches on the stick of Time are not usually preceded by a brass band.

"THOMAS S. HOBBS, Canada. 1869."

"With sincere regard and affection for one whose work, character and influence will live and bear fruit in every clime and far beyond the bounds of time.

"WM. PENHALE, M.R.C.V.S., Holsworthy, 1871."

"So he fed them with a faithful and true heart, and ruled them prudently with all his power.

"H. W. HORWILL, Kew Gardens. 1874."

"TOMMY," AS HIS BOYS SAW HIM

"Memories of Shebbear will always be present with me through life, and the self-sacrificing and noble character of its head master will be a continual inspiration. May God's choicest blessing rest upon you.

"J. THORNE MARTIN, Adelaide, S. Australia. 1876."

"Bravely have you warred with difficulties, gaining many victories, and heartily have you toiled, reaping rich rewards. May your remaining days be many and full of joy, forgetting time and toil and care and rejoicing in all successes, especially those by which the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ are advanced.

"W. R. K. BAULKWILL. 1877."

"I have always admired Mr. Ruddle's honesty, sincerity, and manliness.

"S. B. LANE, Brighton. 1878."

"No words of which I am capable and no contribution from my limited means can even remotely express my love and esteem for one who gave me such high ideals of life and taught me so to reverence the very name of Jesus of Nazareth.

"J. H. BLACKWELL, Lee, S.E."

"He always taught his pupils nobility of character, elevation of thought, tenderness of spirit, straightforwardness of conduct and especially to be thorough in their work.

"R. E. CRADDOCK, Handsworth. 1879."

"With sincere good wishes and very affectionate remembrance of the time (now long

"TOMMY," AS HIS BOYS SAW HIM

past) when 'still *we* gazed and still *our* wonder grew, that one small head could carry all he knew.'

"JOHN M. GOVER, Lincoln's Inn, W.C."

"For more than I can express: *Thank* you, and again, Thank you. I am striving to master the lesson you taught me to try and learn, and if at the end I pass, the credit will be given to my teacher.

"BOB BREALY, Rochdale. 1881."

"With the hope that these Greetings from Old Shebbearians may give him as much cheer in Life's evening as his words gave them in Life's morning.

"J. ROUNSEFELL, Plymouth. 1881."

"Grateful and affectionate greetings to my head master. Next to Christian parentage I value the inestimable boon of having been Thos. Ruddle's pupil for four years and the influence he still exercises as a result. I dislike the contemplation of what, otherwise, might have been my conception of duty, personal and national.

"FRED. WM. RICHARDS, S. Australia. 1883."

"As one of the fortunate beings who came under your kindly teaching I am heartily pleased at the occasion to express the deep respect, bordering on worship, in which you are held by your old pupil.

"PETER ELLIS, West Australia. 1883."

"May peace and content attend you in your remaining days; rest assured the example of

"TOMMY," AS HIS BOYS SAW HIM

your life, duties never neglected, and afflictions bravely borne, will be all-enduring.

"J. H. BENDLE, Bath. 1884."

"Noble he was, contemning all things mean,
His truth unquestioned and his soul serene.
Shame knew him not, he dreaded no
disgrace,

Truth, simple truth, was written in his face.

"W. H. TRICK, New Oxford Street, London.
1885."

"With every good wish from one who was greatly impressed not only by a brilliant intellect, but by a noble character.

"W. K. COOPER, Harrogate. 1890."

"May you fully realise the truth expressed in a line of your beloved Browning, 'The best is yet to be.

"WILFRID J. LUKE, Plymouth. 1895."

"For your kindly sympathy and stimulus to manfulness given to one who in school days at Shebbear was not strong, you are always remembered with affection by

"FRED BLACKMORE, Ealing. 1896."

"Wishing you the very best, with the love and respect of an uncommon good boy.

"PERCY F. HARRIS, Middlesbrough. 1898."

X.

**“T. R.” AND HIS
ASSISTANT MASTERS.**

THE problem of selecting assistant masters in a school where nearly all the boys are in residence is not an easy one. Most of the masters, like the boys, are resident, and this is especially necessary at Shebbear, where the assistance of visiting masters cannot be called in. Many a man who would do well as a teacher in a day-school finds himself in difficulties when he has to deal with more than a hundred boys out of school hours and living together under conditions which throw them into the closest association with each other. Experience and tact count for even more than actual attainment in the management of boys so situated. As a unit the average boy is easily amenable to discipline, but in its corporate capacity the "genus puer" will present a problem to the most astute mind that has to deal with it. What one boy does not know in the way of outwitting authority another will put him up to, with the result that he who has to manage a number of boys must be prepared to anticipate the many-sidedness of youth as a whole.

The head master was quite equal to the task in all its phases, but it was not so with some of his assistants. Great care was always exercised in the choice of men suitable for the duties of supervision as well as for teaching. But the best testimonials and references often mislead, owing to the fact that the conditions differ. It is the work that tells and decides as to fitness for such a post. Life at Shebbear was a great discipline to the teacher as well as to the taught. The distance from centres of population and social activity—"nine miles from everywhere"—itself

"T. R." AND HIS ASSISTANT MASTERS

constituted a test of true virility. Man or boy must be prepared to take his work seriously if he were to overcome his initial home-sickness or that indefinable sense of remoteness which sometimes gave rise to an irresistible longing for a sight of the crowded roofs and chimney-pots of a town. Boys and men have been known to take a short cut to happiness by making for the nearest railway-station. If they have succeeded in permanently estranging themselves from Shebbear their loss has been complete.

Assistant masters have come to Shebbear from all parts of the country, and have been subjected from the outset of their career to that quizzical estimate which is characteristic of boyhood. Occasionally their speech bewrayed them, as in the case of the Yorkshire man who astonished his arithmetic class by telling them to "turn the divisor oopside down and mooltiply," and subsequently added to their delight by recording the adventure of a huntsman who met with an accident of such a nature that "he nevermore putt futt in stirroop." Such peculiarities did not disturb the head master if he found a colleague apt to teach and firm in the maintenance of good order. He did not expect anything like uniformity in those about him, but rather rejoiced in the variety of speech and manner which he found in his pupils, as well as in his masters. It was a great gathering-ground of dialect, and he was one who delighted in these varied remnants of Old English accent and idiom, often using them as illustrations in his lessons on the mother tongue. Welshmen, too, came and went. Of one of them Mr.

"T. R." AND HIS ASSISTANT MASTERS

Ruddle says, he "is an excellent teacher and disciplinarian; keeps first-rate order; gets the boys on remarkably well; and, withal, is honoured and respected by the pupils." Of another he records: "X has left. He seems greatly improved, and was a most cheerful and willing assistant. But somehow he could not keep order; his class was always unruly and rebellious and as our number was increasing so fast we were obliged to get a better man."

Writing on February 1st, 1881, to Rev. John Thorne he gives an account of the great snowstorm in January of that year, which serves to illustrate the kind of experience sometimes to be had upon the moors of Devon. Speaking of the Australian lads in whom Mr. Thorne took such an interest, he writes: "When they return to Australia they will be able to give you details of the severest snowstorm that has been seen or known in England since 1814. The day appointed for the return of the boys was the very day of the great fall. The roads were completely blocked. Eighteen boys and a German master from London were blocked at Okehampton and could not proceed till Saturday (Tuesday till Saturday). In other directions, too, boys were stopped. At Southmolton Road two boys and a master were stopped from Tuesday till the following Monday. Ten boys got as far as Plymouth, and then turned back home, hearing that it was impossible to get to Dunsland Cross. The road leading to Hay Farm was in the lower part eight feet deep in snow quite across; while between Hollacombe and Anvil Corner it was from ten feet to twelve feet deep. The boys are now

"T. R." AND HIS ASSISTANT MASTERS

in and, strangely enough, seem to me as healthy as I ever saw them."

The German master mentioned in this letter was Herr Luz, whose introduction to Shebbear under such circumstances was scarcely likely to inspire him with any high regard for the place. Yet of all the foreign masters who came to Shebbear there was none more generally respected by his colleagues and by the boys than this cultured German. The boys who had to spend an enforced sojourn with him at Okehampton on that memorable occasion had soon learnt to admire him for his resourcefulness and general bonhomie as he took his place among them as a companion in tribulation. When he reached Shebbear and commenced his work at the College it was soon found that he was a teacher of exceptional merit. His knowledge of French wellnigh equalled that of his mother-tongue, and he was willing to put himself to any trouble to assist students ready to work. His general reading was very comprehensive, and his amiability was such that he became the boon companion not only of his colleagues in the masters' room, but of the head master also, who sought him out after school hours, and either joined the staff in the masters' room or carried him off to his own house, where the evening hours would be passed in the discussion of questions of mutual interest. It was a liberal education to be present at these discussions, for both were men of widest reading in philosophy as well as in general literature. They differed widely in judgement, but entertained such respect for each other that no mere difference of opinion could estrange them. The chief was apt to get warm

"T. R." AND HIS ASSISTANT MASTERS

in argument, and to express himself in terms so exaggerated that one of his opponents once ventured to say, "You can't talk, you must scream." The German, however, was cool, collected, and withal so skilful in the thrust and parry of dialectics that the argumentative combat resembled the duel between Fitz-James and Roderick Dhu, which Mr. Ruddle often read aloud as an instance of graphic poetical narrative. It was a cause for some astonishment in the masters' room when it became known that a man of such handsome appearance, fine physique and eminent learning should have before him as the goal of his ambition, a University professorship in his own country, with a probable income of £100 a year.

One of his successors in the foreign language mastership stands out as a marked contrast in many respects, though he was also a man of ripe scholarship. Fresh from the University of Bonn, where he had taken his Doctorate in Philosophy, he seemed to have made up his mind to have done with the self-restraint to which he had schooled himself for the purpose of securing his diploma, and to give way to an arrant Bohemianism which was out of harmony with his surroundings at Shebbear. The world of gaiety in which he desired to revel was too far distant, and he therefore chafed at the enforced restraint to which he was again committed. He frankly stated that he should not stay longer at the College than was necessary to make him fluent in conversational English. There can be no doubt that he profited by his experience at Shebbear under the influence of a Puritanism

which was distasteful to him, and the breaking-in has since made it possible for him to secure good posts and to do much useful work. But the process was a painful one, and he resisted reproof. "He will be Pope," he once said of the chief after a remonstrance of more than usual severity. His respect, however, grew as he recognized the innate kindness of one who never hesitated to discharge a duty, however disagreeable it might be.

The class room in which the German master of that period taught his pupils was situated at the extreme end of the hot-water service which was intended to warm the rooms in cold weather. This tutor was especially sensitive to cold and the wintry weather tried him. He made up his mind to have either a change of classroom or more heat. As no efforts of the stoker seemed to secure the latter and there seemed no likelihood of any exchange, he chose his own method of entering a strong protest. He came before his class one morning fully equipped, as if for a long journey through frost and snow. He had on hat and scarf, overcoat and leggings, and paced vigorously up and down as he went through the lessons, keeping a watchful eye upon the door for the moment when the head master might appear on his usual visit to the classroom. When that moment arrived the chief naturally looked at him in astonishment, and was met with the words uttered with explosive vehemence :

"Mr. Ruddle, I have made no contract to freeze ! If I cannot be warm, I cannot teach."

The humour of the situation had its effect upon one who was easily moved by such an appeal.

The doctor's English at this period, under cir-

"T. R." AND HIS ASSISTANT MASTERS

cumstances of some emotion, also revealed a decided advance upon his earlier attempts at hasty expression in a language not native to him. He was one day found inflicting an imposition upon a boy who had rudely been making fun of him. His indignation allowed him no time to reflect upon his phraseology: "You will write me 500 times 'I must not make nonsense against my teacher.'" This example of "English as she is spoke" became a classic in the traditions of the school, together with the complaint against the carver at the dinner-table one day, "You have given me too few flesh." No one enjoyed and treasured such instances of confusion of idiom more fully than the head master himself.

The kindly interest taken by him in men who proved themselves worthy led frequently to correspondence after they had left the College. As an instance of such good feeling, evidently reciprocated by a foreign master who had for some years been engaged elsewhere, but who still remembered the head master of Shiebear College, the following extract may be given from one of his letters to Mr. Thorne, dated 5th June, 1887: "It may interest you to know that I received this morning from Professor Koch, of Lund, Sweden, one of our old French and German masters, and now Professor of the Teutonic Languages at Lund, a most elaborate pamphlet (which would fill a good octavo volume) on the 'Origin and History of the English Relative Pronouns.' Professor Koch's treatise will at once take rank with the treatise of his great German namesake on the English Language and with Professor Mätzner's book."

"T. R." AND HIS ASSISTANT MASTERS

His estimate of men was not a purely academic one, though no one had a more sincere regard for scholarship and culture. One of his letters reveals his method of estimating such worth. "It is sad to think of such a man leaving the bridge when the gale is at its height. We are passing through a time of trial here, and it is mighty sad after so many years' hard work. But even if I had thought of retiring I certainly should put aside such a thought now. Our business is to work harder and to regain the ground we have lost. The worst loss we have had for some years is that of Mr. Z. His successor can teach as well as he could. But Mr. Z's. gentlemanly bearing, high principle and noble aims his successor cannot teach. Such things are hard to get at. Teachers we can secure in almost any number if we are only willing to pay the price; but I do not think there is any quotation for the latter qualities, and when secured they are priceless." Of another he says: "He is a *man*, a cultured scholar, and an earnest Christian." He finds delight in saying upon occasion, "I am splendidly backed up by the staff, who work harmoniously, earnestly, and very conscientiously." Of another assistant he says later: "Fortunately we have secured the services of a gentleman who, I hope, will equal Z. in character and gentlemanly bearing and surpass him in knowledge and skill as a teacher. He is a splendid colleague and keeps excellent order. I only hope he will stay at Shebbear as long as I stay—that is, if he continues as he has begun."

Mr. Ruddle's eagerness for fairplay sometimes made the position of his assistant masters diffi-

"T. R." AND HIS ASSISTANT MASTERS

cult. They were in constant personal touch with the boys, not only in school-time, but out of school hours as well. Thus it would happen that friction would arise between some designing lad and the master-on-duty. The head master constituted a ready Court of Appeal against his subordinate, as the youngest boy could win his ear, if he watched his opportunity carefully and by presenting a plausible story made out a case against a master whose displeasure he had incurred. In his anxiety to do justice to the boys under his care the Chief often appeared to his assistants to lack that appreciation of the difficulties of their position to which they considered themselves entitled.

One junior master was called to account for rather unwise action respecting a pupil, who duly appealed to the head. Soon after, the same master had occasion to inflict punishment upon the lad who openly defied his authority, and then represented himself as having been treated vindictively because of his previous reference to the head master. Fortunately, the junior had explained his position in the masters' room, expressing at the time his fear that his action would be misinterpreted by the chief. The explosion took place in the absence of his colleagues, and without their having any opportunity to intervene. As soon, however, as they heard of it one of their number was deputed to interview the head master and put the whole case before him. He immediately took in the situation and made an ample apology to his offended junior, at the same time making it clear to the lad in question that his abuse of a necessary privilege was an offence too grave to be lightly condoned.

"T. R." AND HIS ASSISTANT MASTERS

Not always, however, would he accept even the combined opinion of his assistant masters against his own maturer judgement. In a serious altercation which had taken place between two of the senior lads, the opinion of the masters went strongly against one of them, who had been a fruitful source of disorder and difficulty in connection with the out-of-school discipline, whilst the other was of a quieter disposition and had given no trouble whatever. To the surprise of the staff his decision went entirely against the quieter and apparently more inoffensive lad, even though at its worst the evidence seemed to be of the kind which he would himself describe as "Six of one and half a dozen of the other." The dissatisfaction of the masters was so evident that he did not fail to note it. He said nothing before the boys, but came to the masters' room immediately afterwards. "I see you men disagree with what I have done in the case of X."

They had to admit that it was so and frankly gave their reasons.

"It is only natural, perhaps, that you should think so, for I know that Y is a troublesome fellow; but this is a case where magisterial prejudice against the man with a poor record might do great harm. X, who has plenty of power of self-control took advantage of Y's lack of it, and gave provocation which he well knew Y could not withstand."

It was a great lesson all round, and revealed the inherent goodness as well as greatness of the man. The troublesome lad in question learnt to revere a teacher who seemed to understand him through and through, and to act with strict impartiality; whilst the men in training for the

"T. R." AND HIS ASSISTANT MASTERS

teaching profession had a lifelong lesson in right values.

The Vicar of Maryport, a former member of the College staff, says :

"I feel now, as I felt when at Shebbear College for seven years, that there should not necessarily be an impassable gulf between master and boy, and that without any loss of dignity or respect. In this particular, it seems to me, Mr. Ruddle himself was a shining example, always ready to hear, sympathise, and support in what he judged to be right and best, whether with master or boy."



Thomas Ruddell in Later Years.

[To face p. 151.]

XI.

**AS TEACHER AND FRIEND
OF BOYS AND MEN.**

MR. W. B. LUKE, J.P., of Kilburn, who was a student at the school in the early seventies gives a picture of Mr. Ruddle at work in those days as he is remembered by those who received their education in the old schoolroom.

“The schoolroom of those days still exists, and is now used as a laundry. It was really not an unsuitable room, or would not have been if it had not been dreadfully cold in winter and intensely hot in summer. The side windows gave upon the stone-paved court, and at the farther end a large window opened a fine view of the woods a mile away, above which rose the outline of the heights of Dartmoor. Here the first class would gather round the head master, who with stool tilted back, or sometimes walking up and down with intense energy, drummed the lesson of the hour into the heads of his pupils. It was not all toil; looking back on these hours through the softening haze of time, it seems that, more often than not, the hard lesson of the book would dissolve itself into a free and stimulating talk. Poetry, politics, and personalia would all in turn be summoned to relieve the dreariness of the lesson, and the inexhaustible animation of the teacher could hardly fail to communicate itself in some measure to the most stolid of his listeners. All, I think, without exception, felt the magnetism of that powerful individuality, and some feel it still. No ordinarily plastic mind could fail to receive lasting impressions from the professorial talks—for such they were, rather than mere school lessons—that poured forth day after day, dealing with all sorts of

AS TEACHER AND FRIEND OF BOYS AND MEN

questions, religious, social, historical, and political, couched in burning language, and coloured with a Carlylean vividness."

This is how the writer saw him as standing round the same desk before the same window we went through our various lessons with him. Much has been done in the endeavour to improve the methods of education since those days of nearly forty years ago; the surprising thing is that so much of the so-called new education was anticipated in the work of this great teacher. Single-handed, he did in those days the work which is now divided among many specialists, and, apart from the purely technical skill and the higher refinements of detail which specialization affords, his work was done efficiently. Under his own Principal at Borough Road, the late Sir Joshua Fitch, he had acquired that interest in the grammar and history of the English language which led him to plan a school text-book upon this subject. On the eve of its completion he found that he had been anticipated by Mason, but he gave us the advantage of his notes which a maturer understanding of the subject shows to have equalled and in many respects surpassed those of his rival.

His lessons and notes in Geography in those days were such as to quicken the interest of the dullest. The newest and best text-books were in his hands, and he read them himself with avidity that he might be in full possession of the facts before he came to class. In later days one of his pupils stood first in England in this subject with the Royal Geographical Society's Prize and Medal awarded at the Senior Oxford Local Examination.

AS TEACHER AND FRIEND OF BOYS AND MEN

In the Literature, as well as the Grammar, of the English Language everyone felt the stimulus of his teaching and acquired a love for the mother-tongue which remained after the schooldays were over. On more than one occasion his pupils stood first in English at the Locals and London University Examinations, and it has already been stated that a Shebbear boy won the Chancellor's Prize for an English Essay at Oxford.

Dr. F. W. Richards, of the Supreme Court, Adelaide, S. Australia, says, in words which most of the Old Boys will endorse: "As a teacher in the ordinary sense, Mr. Ruddle was I think for the average pupil, greatest in English Grammar and Language, English History, Scripture, and Logic. He was too quick himself as a mathematician to appreciate the difficulties of the average boy in such subjects. But one who came to him with a distaste for Grammar left him with a love and admiration for his mother-tongue, its history and literature. One who found History a matter of dry bones found that those dry bones could be quickened by Mr. Ruddle and clothed with the story of his people. How we have seen him convulsed with merriment or consumed with indignation as we have sat before him or stood round the desk that was the throne of a true king among men." One striking fact to be noted in the testimony of his pupils concerning him is that of those who left Shebbear and came under other tutors of eminent ability in some of the greatest halls of learning in the country. The impress of Mr. Ruddle's influence was never obliterated, and the tribute of some of these is most decisive against any suspicion that the romance of youthful

AS TEACHER AND FRIEND OF BOYS AND MEN

imagination has put a halo of undue brilliance about the head of their old schoolmaster.

One of the most brilliant but least effusive of his old pupils says :

"It is not easy, or even possible, to trace out exactly what one owes to the various influences that have moulded one's own life, but I could never hesitate to attribute to Mr. Ruddle a far greater share than a pupil can ordinarily ascribe to his schoolmaster. If in my adult years our friendship was sustained by the fact that we had so many interests in common, that in itself must be largely due to the impressions he made upon me, both by example and by teaching, in my boyhood and youth. In the case of many who knew him, his work will still go on for many years by means of the minds he helped to train and the characters he helped to fashion."

The key to his success is to be found in his enthusiasm for knowledge and his zeal in imparting it. His brother has rightly described him as a "born teacher." He once told some of his masters how in his Borough Road days he had gone in company with the other students to witness a model lesson at one of the London schools. When they returned, Dr. Fitch, who had himself been with them, asked what they thought of the lesson and of the methods of the particularly successful teacher to whom they had listened. Most of his companions attributed the success to the methods adopted, and the Principal asked : "What have you to say about it, Mr. Ruddle?" "Well, sir, to be quite candid," he replied, "I think that enthusiasm like that would make almost any method successful."

AS TEACHER AND FRIEND OF BOYS AND MEN

Throughout his career he laid little stress upon method in his own teaching, though he liked to see it in others. He would sometimes frame an elaborate time-table, and then his chief aim seemed to be to see how much he could depart from it. The fact was that the dead level of mere routine was irritating to a teacher so much alive as he. He could never move in a rut. It was the monotony of elementary education and the red-tape of the officialism of that day that drove him out of it and made him ready to go anywhere and endure any hardness, rather than become part of an educational machine. Lack of method sometimes made his work appear spasmodic and disjointed, for he would take up some new scheme of study or some new subject and work at it with zest for a time, only to discard it before any real progress had been made in it. No doubt the exigencies of the general work of the school and the continually changing conditions about him gave rise to these apparent inconsistencies. But "even his failings leaned to virtue's side" in this particular, for some realms of knowledge were thus opened up to his students which might otherwise have been to them as a sealed book.

One thing is certain—he fulfilled the canons laid down by A. C. Benson and others for the successful teacher. He adopted the methods best suited to himself and used them for all he was worth. He was the slave of no tradition or convention, but made the best use he could of the tools and the material at his disposal. He regarded his school as his larger self; it was part and parcel, to use his own phrase, of his existence. He never governed too much, but knew

AS TEACHER AND FRIEND OF BOYS AND MEN

how to govern well. He had the last, but most necessary resource of a good disciplinarian and teacher, the art of making things exceedingly disagreeable if they did not go according to his liking. The result was that everybody listened to him, feared him, and then learnt to love him.

But for a final and complete understanding of his power as a teacher, it is necessary to know how he regarded his pupils. This is happily revealed in a number of letters and communications sent to various correspondents throughout the world, and in his various messages and addresses to his Old Boys at the time of their Reunion.

When, in 1893, he wrote the "Life of Samuel Thomas Thorne," one of the first Bible Christian missionaries to Yunnan, West China, the inscription was: "To the 'Old Boys' of the Bible Christian College, Shebbear, North Devon. This record of the Life and Death of a School-fellow is dedicated by their friend and former teacher, Thomas Ruddle." There we have a cardinal factor in his influence over his pupils; he was not only a teacher, but a personal friend, and all the better teacher because he was a friend. He takes a delight in reproducing his pupils' stories against himself. In this biography he quotes from one of Thorne's letters whilst he was a boy at school, and one can see him chuckle and rub his hands as he does so: "I have commenced Mark's Gospel in Greek, but cannot tell you how I am getting on with it; because when I went up with my first lesson Mr. Ruddle was asleep most of the time, so that he didn't under-

stand much of it." His estimate of the lad is given, however, in these terms: "He worked honestly and diligently in everything he attempted and made good progress in all. Had he made it the first business of his life to do so he might have excelled in Classics, Mathematics, or, more probably than either, in Physical Science." As he concludes the story of Thorne's life he says, and all his Old Boys will recognise the tones of his voice in the utterance, "I can add no more. If the story of Mr. Thorne's life and death, and the testimony of his fellow missionaries, have not revealed a character, noble, strong and good, the character of a man, a gentleman, and a Christian, no words of mine would be able to do so, or ought to be able."

Sam Pollard, another of his Old Boys, who gave up a good position in the Civil Service to become one of the fellow missionaries referred to, and is the author of "Tight Corners in China," sends him a letter which begins, "Dear Mr. Ruddle,—Your letter calls up old memories. Your writing was very close and small. What do you think it reminded me of? I remembered that it was in such writing you used to give us boys the characters of Brutus and Cassius and other heroes of Shakespeare. Thank God for those old days." Here are none of the conventionalities of formal correspondence, but just that heart-grip which betokens an abiding affection for the friend of one's youth.

In a letter dated 26th April, 1894, to Mr. James Thorne Martin, of Adelaide, acknowledging the gift of a valuable prize by the Association of Old Shebbear Boys in South Australia, he says: "The heartiness of the Australian Old Boys is

most gratifying to me. It is a proof that one has not lived wholly in vain"; and later in the same letter occurs the following indication of his keen interest in the work of his old pupils in China :

"Thank you for your kindly notice of the story of Sam Thorne's life. We have sent some noble workers to China. I feel quite sure that if all the silent anguish and lonely sorrow of Frank Dymond were known and appreciated we should confess that the story of Christianity has not many nobler chapters to boast. I did not half appreciate his work and self-sacrifice till I had several talks with Mrs. Thorne about him. And now Australia is doing her share in this work. There is no ultimate danger for Christianity—however much George Macdonald may say—as long as we have men of the stamp of Sam Thorne and Frank Dymond, and Conferences prepared to send them out and support them."

But of former pupils on this great field of service in China it was not the missionaries alone who monopolised his interest. In one of his letters to Rev. John Thorne he writes, in 1893 :

"One of our pupils is in Peking with a view to Consular service. I only hope he may live to be the English Consul nearest Yunnan. If so, it would be indeed remarkable that a school that sent out three out of four of the earliest Christian missionaries to Yunnan should also send out the resident English Consul. Mr. Raab, too, will be vastly different from some Consuls. He is as pure in thought and life as a maiden of sixteen, and hates impurity of word or look or language as he hates Satan himself."

AS TEACHER AND FRIEND OF BOYS AND MEN

When he has to report the death of this brilliant pupil at a later period in a letter dated 18th April, 1889, he says :

“The Raabs have sent me a large number of interesting books and MSS. of Charlie’s ; some 70 Kodak snapshots of localities in China—Peking, the wall of China, Amoy, etc., etc.—and some beautiful specimens of Chinese needlework for my daughter. I have read the entries in Charlie’s diaries, and they confirm the very high opinion I always entertained of his exceptional abilities and his sterling goodness of heart. It is one of the inscrutable mysteries of Providence that a young man thus gifted and so likely to make the best use of his gifts should be cut off in the morning of life.”

It is an interesting fact that, though Mr. Ruddle’s wish that an old Shebbear boy might be attached to the Consular service at Yunnan Fu has not yet been fulfilled, Mr. Horace Gammon, grandson of the late Rev. John Gammon, one of the former Governors of Shebbear College, is at present, and by his own choice, an Assistant Consul in that city.

Nor is his concern alone with the boys who have got on well in life, or with those who give evidence of that noble aim and lofty purpose which his own example served to keep before them. In some of his letters there is an undercurrent of disappointment as he has to admit the failure of one and another to realise the hopes of their friends and his own anticipations of success in life. Where there is anything like moral downfall he notes it with sadness, but still

AS TEACHER AND FRIEND OF BOYS AND MEN

clings to the hope of restoration, and in one or two instances he records with delight the fact that one and another, about whose career he had become more than anxious, have recovered themselves. It is evident that nothing gives him greater pleasure than to be of some assistance in helping them to a fresh start in life.

Towards the close of his life, after giving his Australian friend an account of the last Old Boys' Reunion in London, at which a Testimonial Fund was inaugurated, he concludes his story of the success of some of them by saying, "But if I were to go on to enumerate all the Old Boys who are fighting life's battle nobly and well I should send you a small volume, not a letter."

As examples of Mr. Ruddle's sympathetic insight into the characters of both boys and men, the following terse descriptions may be quoted. They illustrate his keen appreciation of the true causes of success or failure, together with his own delight at the success, or distress at the failure, of those whom he followed with interest in their after-life.

The first two relate to local preachers in the Shebbear Circuit: one of them an old pupil; the other a veteran living at his wife's old home, Sutcombe.

J. E. V. is described as:

"A man of high intelligence, exceptionally well-read, honourable in all his dealings, and of keen spiritual intuition. As a boy at Shebbear he was a pattern of industry and accuracy, never shirking his work, never begging or stealing of others, but grappling unaided with difficulties till he overcame them. And in this

AS TEACHER AND FRIEND OF BOYS AND MEN

case, as in a thousand others, the child was father of the man. Whatever he undertakes to do is well done. He allows neither hard work, nor the dulness of some, nor the ingratitude of others, to betray him into slovenliness.

"One can imagine the utter surprise of a university don, strolling into one of our country chapels, and seeing in the pulpit a man oddly dressed, unkempt, strange in manner, with a shrill, half-audible voice, uttering truths that would do no discredit to St. Mary's at Oxford, or King's College Chapel at Cambridge, illumined by a wealth of reading that many an undergraduate, and not a few dons, might envy."

E. M. is—

"A yeoman, living plainly on his own little farm, afraid of no hard work, believing that neither the rough hand nor the coarse jacket disgraces a man, that falsehood, treachery, and impurity are the things that defile, courting no man's smile, fearing no man's frown, trusting in God and doing what he believes to be right, he is a survival of what was best in early Methodism, and in the Puritanism of an earlier date."

Of some of the more difficult problems which do not fail to make their appearance in all school and college life, he says :

"Q's failure weighs heavily on me ; but really I could not help it. I knew before he went up he was going to fail and told him so. He worked hard last term, but not very wisely, and, as the result shows, not successfully. If

AS TEACHER AND FRIEND OF BOYS AND MEN

he had but H's knowledge of the *way to work* success would be easy."

Of another he says :

"I am anxious and doubtful about his ultimate success. He is by no means idle, but he is very forgetful and beyond almost any fellow I know lacks *method*. I have done all I could to correct the habit, but it is inherent, and when according to his own views he is most methodical, he appears to an intelligent looker-on as most hopelessly without method."

"Z is rather impulsive and fickle. I do not think he will ever make a scholar or even a close, hard reader. He is, however, a good fellow, visits the sick, is willing to travel and preach and has certainly improved very much in his public speaking. Here he is everywhere liked and deeply respected ; but I find among the more thoughtful part of our friends a feeling of doubt as to his adaptation to the work of the ministry."

Of another :

"He never had a fair opportunity of making the best of himself. He was always uncertain of his future, which prevented him from concentrating his energies in any given direction. Morally I think he greatly improved. When he left us he was as good a fellow as I wish to teach."

"X seems to have blown alternately hot and cold. What the wonderful new discoveries he has made may be I cannot tell ; but I find that his practice is attacked in some quarters as sternly as his theology. Mr. Bourne was here a few days ago ; and I was defending him and

AS TEACHER AND FRIEND OF BOYS AND MEN

saying all the good (not a little) which I truthfully could about him, and Mr. Bourne said that his conduct had estranged many friends and he was very much afraid indeed that the Conference would be compelled—in spite of the personal efforts of his friends—to reject him when his case comes on. I am wonderfully sorry for this affair; for he has the stuff in him out of which heroes can be made; and he ought to have made a very Puritan amongst us, and an acknowledged power in the denomination. It may be so still, and I heartily hope and pray it will.”

His own message to one of the annual gatherings of Old Shebbearians expresses what he would still say, could he himself speak, and the words may well conclude this section:

“These yearly gatherings ought to be occasions of strengthening old friendships and of forming new ones. As the years pass by old faces will be missed and one’s thoughts will be carried backwards and upwards to those—

“‘Whom we have loved long since, and lost awhile.’

But the reflection that their work and memories still live will be our assurance that—

“‘All that is, at all,

Lives ever, past recall:

Earth changes, but the soul and God stand sure.’

“I can appeal to you all as witnesses that I have striven to keep alive among you a strong esprit-de-corps. The words, ‘I was once a Shebbear Boy,’ ought at once to establish the noblest freemasonry among you.”

**LETTER OF MR. RUDDLE TO MR. JAMES
THORNE MARTIN.**

“26th April, 1894.

“Please accept on your account, and on behalf of the Association of Shebbear Old Boys in South Australia, my warmest thanks for your generous offer of a handsome prize to the pupils here. The boys return to-day from the Spring vacation and I will make the announcement to-morrow. It also happens that the annual meeting of the Shebbear Old Boys in London takes place on Saturday (the 28th) and I am quite sure that the fellows will be pleased and proud to hear what you have done. I cannot be present myself as to-morrow is the first day's work for the Term and we have a new science master. It would therefore be most undesirable for me to be absent from my duties on Saturday and Monday. But Mr. Vaughan, of Torrington, is to take the chair, and I have sent him word, and the paragraph from your letter shall be read at the meeting, which is to take place at the Holborn Restaurant. The heartiness of the Australian Old Boys is most gratifying to me. It is a proof that one has not lived wholly in vain. I enclose you an appeal to the Old Boys at home that I have printed for circulation at Saturday's gathering.

“I don't know how it is, but certainly the change of place and climate and associations gives an energy, a pluck, and a kind of *dash* to Englishmen who emigrate to our Colonies, that they did not possess at home. If my vision of the future is correct the day is not far distant when the three great Powers of the world will be the United States, a United Australia, and a regenerated and probably re-

publican Russia. At all events, these are the places where the resources are seemingly inexhaustible, and the possibilities of the people equal to the resources of the land. But whatever may be hidden behind the veil of the future one thing is obvious, viz., that the great mission of England in the long series of the nations was to found and give a fair start to nations destined to be far mightier than herself—and as much wiser as mightier—wise enough to know that true strength is not found nor tasted on battlefields, but in social improvements and in moral and religious movements; wise enough to see in men like Edison greater heroes than in the Nelson and Wellingtons of our boyhood's worship.

LETTERS TO DR. F. W. RICHARDS, OF ADELAIDE, S. AUSTRALIA.

“September 14th, 1899.

“It is splendid of you fellows in your far-off Southern home to think of us in England—at Shebbear here. There is no phase of my life and work so pleasing as my correspondence with a number of pupils in many lands—every continent is represented, even South America. In some cases the letters are infinitely better than any books for the mere information they contain, apart from the deeper pleasure of a life friendship. The letters I received from Charlie Raab, amounting to considerably over 80, contain a fuller and more accurate account of China than anything I have met with elsewhere, though confined to the neighbourhoods of Peking and Amoy. The high moral tone which Charlie preserved when surrounded by officials, many of whom were godless and im-

AS TEACHER AND FRIEND OF BOYS AND MEN

pure, is a splendid testimony to his character. From another old pupil I get clearer views of affairs in Johannesburg than can possibly be got from the newspapers—always more or less prejudiced or ‘retained,’ as you lawyers say.

“The old school continues to prosper. I have sent you a copy of the ‘Educational Times,’ in which you will see what we have done this year. Out of 40 candidates 39 passed—or only $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent failures. The failures, as you will see, in the Kingdom were on an average 37 per cent. We take the first place in England out of 4,558 candidates, or, including Juniors, 5,870 candidates. The winner of this high distinction is called Werren, and is destined for the Wesleyan ministry. He is one of the best and most amiable, as well as one of the ablest lads we ever had in our midst. Werren also takes the Taylor Jones prize as first in England in Scripture—this is the third year in succession that that prize has fallen to Shebbear.

.
“My own lost darling was to me, a wise counsellor in the sunshine, a never-failing support in tempest and storm, a true help-meet always.

“You may be sure I understand the allusions to the loss of your dear sister. One who has had to stand by and see the dearest of earth taken away is not alarmed afterwards at the dark valley,—for in reality he has already passed through the darkness of the Valley of Death.

“I am only too glad you have nothing to do, and no wish to have to do, with gambling in gold or copper mines. This eager thirst for gold is eating out the life of the nation, just

AS TEACHER AND FRIEND OF BOYS AND MEN

as a mad militarism is destroying France. I read with deep regret a day or two ago the statement that the Australian colonies do more in betting at horse-races, in proportion to the number of the inhabitants, than any people on earth. This is not love of sport: it is sheer love of getting other people's money without earning it,—and, whatever it may be called in English law, in the law of the Eternal it is labelled theft.

“Mr. John Thorne has sent me a most kindly and urgent invitation to visit Australia—Chief Justice Way adds his own wish in the same direction. Dr. Torr repeats the same fervently, and now you say the same thing. I only wish I could see the way clear. But if that is impossible I hope you dear friends will not think my gratitude the less because I was unable to avail myself of your kindness.”

“May 4th, 1905.

“I need hardly tell you how inspiring such a message as yours is, from across the wide seas. Shebbear is a lonely place, and as I get on in years the family are leaving me, to play their own part in the bustle and business of life. On this account the letters I receive from old pupils, especially such old pupils as are scattered over the world, in America, Africa, Australia, and, to a smaller extent, Asia, increase in value and interest,—in fact they become much more than interesting,—a spur to hold on, and to do life's work honourably and uncomplainingly till my time comes. I was especially pleased with what you said of your own father. In my judgment the saddest sign of our own times is the decay of reverence,—and all true reverence begins at home. The

AS TEACHER AND FRIEND OF BOYS AND MEN

fifth commandment is the great corner-stone of civil society. From reverence for father and mother arises presently reverence for town or city, with its local government and traditions, for country with its wider interests and responsibilities, and lastly for that great home of which God is the Father and Christ the Elder Brother.

“Will you kindly convey to my friends in Australia my deep gratitude for their kindly remembrance of the old school and of myself.”



**The Rt. Hon. Sir Samuel James Way, Bart.
Chief Justice of South Australia and
Chancellor of the University of Adelaide.**

XII.

**MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO
SIR SAMUEL WAY.**



"24th December, 1895.

"**A**LL men everywhere are asking themselves what is the meaning of the 'brevis furor' of President Cleveland. 'Women,' says Hamlet, 'have their fits.' Surely nations are feminine in this particular. (*Respublica*, by the way, is feminine, while *Imperium* is suggestively neuter.) We shall soon have a well-qualified medical missionary in China. One of my own ex-pupils is private secretary of the English ambassador at Peking, and through him I get glimpses of Chinese life which even our missionaries are unable to get."

"1st October, 1896.

"On a careful examination of our records I find that the past year is on the whole the most successful we have known. No one has risen to the altitude of H. W. Horwill or W. M. Hocking, but there have been more successes of a really high class than at any previous time. Moreover, during the year Fred Richards has taken LL.D. of London and John Orchard a First Class in the Mathematical Schools at Oxford, two distinctions that would be coveted in any school in the kingdom."

"27th April, 1903.

"I need hardly say I read with great delight the account of the almost endless functions and public engagements you are called upon to face. The marvel to me is how mind and body can bear the strain. It is gratifying to find that the people of South Australia have not been blind to your public services. Some of us when we are unrecognised, or when our vanity whispers we de-

serve recognition, and yet we cannot find it—shelter ourselves under the convenient excuse that a prophet is not without honour save among his own people. But our own common sense tells us what a poor subterfuge this is—except, of course, in reference to the greatest among men. We know that on the whole we get a rough and ready justice—that even among men—among our friends and contemporaries—what a man sows he also reaps. Happy then is that man that finds himself reaping a harvest of gratitude and public approval, after a life of untiring labour.”

“October 3rd, 1904.

“The President, the grandson of old Robin Kellaway of this parish, is a man of good business ability, and of wonderful energy. Eighteen hundred pupils and more have passed through my hands at Shebbear, and of them all W. R. K. Baulkwill stands first in vitality. He literally throbs with life, and I venture to predict a year of widespread prosperity under his guidance and inspiration.

“Edgehill this year attains her majority, and right well has she acquitted herself. For so young a school to get two girls through the London Matric. and six through Oxford Senior in one year is phenomenal; and in Music, Edgehill is quite without a rival in the West. Mr. and Mrs. Reed have achieved a noble triumph. Not the least remarkable feature of the work at Edgehill is the financial success. Both schools are a wonder and puzzle to all well-informed outsiders—such as the Educational Committee of the Devon County Council.”

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO SIR SAMUEL WAY

"August 31st, 1905.

"The Conference just over will hereafter be remembered as the one in which the question of Union with the New Connexion and Methodist Free Churches was practically settled. It is true the matter has yet to be referred to the plebiscite, that is to the Quarterly Meetings of the three Denominations, but if the voice of the Conferences is an indication of the will of the people, the Union is certain to take place.

"In another way of course the Conference will be remembered on account of the death of Mr. Bourne, who was buried at Shebbear on the Saturday of Committee Week—that is, the Saturday before the Conference. Mr. Braund's address at the funeral was worthy of Mr. Bourne, and of the speaker. A strenuous, pure and noble life—darkened by many a sorrow and ending in protracted suffering and weakness! What a mystery it all is! A few days since I read Plato's *Crito* through again—really I have never read a Christian sermon on death and immortality that could be compared to this treatise of a 'Christian before Christ.' (Wesley used these words of Plato's master, Socrates.)

"One most interesting circumstance of the late Conference I inadvertently omitted,—the noble self-sacrifice of the daughter of Mr. F. P. Grandin of Jersey. She is a beautiful, accomplished girl, has fully qualified for the medical profession, and has offered herself for our work in China. Somehow I cannot look on these things as Mr. J. Dymond does. Is self-immolation at all times the wiser and nobler way? At all events I rather begrudge Miss Grandin to China. I dare say it is a petty feeling—a wrong

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO SIR SAMUEL WAY

one. Be it so. I cannot help it. I have often thought that the most insidious temptation offered even to the Son of Man was to cast Himself from the battlements of the Temple, and to rely on guardian angels to shield Him from the rocks.

"October 2nd, 1905.

"I was exceedingly glad to have Sir R. White-Thomson amongst us again. He met me one day at Okehampton and told me how he had enjoyed his visit to Shebbear, and said he should like to see the school again before the end. So I at once suggested that he should do us the honour of distributing our prizes a second time. That was a year ago. It was then too late for last year as all our arrangements had been made; but Sir Robert promised that if health permitted he would come this year if we asked him. In due course I reminded him of his promise, and he promptly answered 'Yes.' Eleven years have stamped their seal on Sir Robert's frame. He is by no means a strong man now. His address was shorter than on the previous occasion; but it was brimful of kindly Christian sympathy. He is a type of a class I fear is passing away, who could—

bear without rebuke

The grand old name of gentleman.

I have tried to do my best for Shebbear for nearly 42 years, and am not disposed now to turn aside. The work however gets more and more trying, for the demands of the government involve immense labour, and all would fall on my hands were I not most faithfully backed by our French master, Mr. Clarke."

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO SIR SAMUEL WAY

"January 18th, 1905.

"Please accept my heartiest thanks for Christmas greeting, containing photos of self and Lady Way. Judging from the former I should think it is capitally done. Even the three dogs appear to have behaved remarkably well, and to have given the camera a fine chance. The clear atmosphere of South Australia seems admirably adapted for photographic work. The landscapes are certainly clearer and the foliage more sharply defined than in our own photos. This is especially the case in the series of photos you kindly sent me a year ago (Gill's Glimpses of Adelaide). Enjoying such a fine climate—in spite of tropical heat occasionally—with a practically boundless expanse of territory, it is an enigma to me why the population remains so low. Many years ago, 30 or 40, I used to think as I held an atlas in my hands, that the great countries of the future would be the United States, which would absorb Canada and Mexico, the United Confederation of Australia, enjoying, of course, political independence, Russia—freed from hateful bureaucracy—and China or Japan. These anticipations were not utterly mistaken, but in some respects have been contradicted by following years. England, you see, I left out of the calculation. Well, England is yet a power in the earth—a moral power, but also a civil and military power. The United States have not absorbed Canada or Mexico, but she has become one of the foremost, if not the foremost nation on earth. Russia has still its Tzar, who professes to love peace, but who sits at ease and luxury in St. Petersburg or near it, and flings into his Maker's face the souls that He had made. China has fallen before

Japan; and now the latter country is in deadly grip with the great Northern giant. Twenty years ahead—Who can tell? The old order changeth; but can any living man say what the new order will be?

“The outcry against ‘Literature’ (not merely ‘classical,’ but English Literature) in favour of Science and so-called ‘*technical*’ education (whatever that may mean) is exhausting itself. Surely it ought to be part of every gentleman’s education—any intelligent Englishman’s education—to be able to read and enjoy a play of Shakespeare, Milton’s ‘Comus,’ Wordsworth’s ‘Intimations of Immortality,’ Shelley’s ‘West Wind,’ or Keats’s ‘Nightingale.’ To my mind this is as important as the molecular formula of Sunlight Soap, or the art of cutting a bit of oak board into some fantastic design. ‘Cui Bono?’ has always been the curse of education: it was never so frightfully so as now.”

“February 15th, 1906.

“Yesterday I attended at Barnstaple the funeral of one of the best women I have ever known: Mrs. Spencer, wife of the late governor. No one knows what the future of Shebbear is to be; but I feel sure that if the school exists for centuries to come it will never have a nobler, kindlier, more devoted lady to manage its home affairs.”

“September 26th, 1906.

“Will you please accept my heartiest thanks for your abiding interest in Shebbear, and in my own work here? It is simply amazing to me how you find time in the midst of a thousand

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO SIR SAMUEL WAY

and one pressing engagements in Australia, to correspond with so many friends in England. You can have but the 24 hours per day enjoyed—or wasted—by all alike; but you must have learnt an economy of minutes which I have quite failed to reach, and I can justly claim that I have not been a reckless spendthrift of time myself. I was glad to have the opportunity of reading the elaborate judgment of the Z Case. Of its legal value—which of course is its highest and permanent worth—I am quite unable to judge. But I was delighted to find that it is possible to argue a question of law in such a way as to be intelligible to every reader. Matthew Arnold justly complained that Englishmen lacked ‘lucidity,’ and used to contrast them to their disadvantage with the best French writers. But in dealing with a difficult technical subject you have avoided the common blunder of our countrymen, and have contrived to be as lucid as a French essayist. The few legal documents I had met with before reading your judgement always recalled the words of Hamlet: “This fellow might be in his time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries.” And then arises the question, ‘Where be his quiddities now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks?’ ”

“November 15th, 1906.

“I was very glad indeed that John Britton Stedeford was elected President. He is a thorough student, having quite a fair knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, an accurate acquaintance with German, and even a slight knowledge of

Arabic. He is, moreover, gentlemanly, modest and devout; and in private life courteous, kindly and strictly honourable. He never advertises himself or his work. It does us credit to put such a man in the chair immediately before uniting with two kindred Christian Churches.

"Here we are plunged into a fierce educational strife—the Lords against the Commons; and what the end will be no man can tell. 'Let us be thankful there will be no politics in Heaven,' said a friend to me on Sunday. I hope not—nor any ecclesiastical fury. Amid the tumult it is difficult at times to see even in vision the—

‘ One far-off divine event
To which the whole Creation moves.’ ”

“June 22nd, 1907.

"Yesterday we laid in the little chapel-yard at Boasley, near Ashbury, the mortal remains of one whom, I know, you greatly respected, William Higman. Another of the links that bound the world of to-day with the world of the past is broken. Isaac Balkwill Vanstone at home, and John Thorne in Australia, are now the only living men, within my knowledge, who formed part of the chain.

"F. W. Bourne and Wm. Higman were the intimate and trusted friends of James Thorne, and as such carried back men's thoughts to the earliest days of the Bible Christian Church.

"William Higman lies beside his wife—one of the sweetest and noblest of women—in that remote chapel-yard, 900 feet above the sea, swept by the wild western winds, and within a few miles of Dartmoor. For several years he was

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO SIR SAMUEL WAY

totally blind. Yet he neither groaned nor complained, but was nearly always cheerful. I do not pretend to understand the mysteries of divine Providence, nor why a good man should be called on to suffer as Mr. Higman suffered, but one result is obvious—it brought out the angelic devotion of his three daughters. These three young girls waiting on their father with a tenderness and devotion that never tired nor complained—was simply the most beautiful thing I have ever seen in my whole life. As long as Mr. Higman is remembered the self-sacrifice of his three daughters must be remembered also. Mr. Higman, like Robert Browning, did not ask for a painless passing-away, a sweet euthanasia kindling into light. He always said he should be content to 'fare like his fellows,' to face the final foe, as he had faced the difficulties of life,—strong in a Father's love. And when the hour came he triumphed signally.

"For my own part I feel that my work here is nearly done. It might have been done better, perhaps; but I am conscious of an untiring aim at doing my best."

"September 12th, 1907.

"I received on Monday morning a copy of the report of the annual meeting of the Australian Association of Shebbear and Way College boys. I can only repeat what I have said before—that nothing has been a greater joy to me, or a greater help in my work—not always easy—than the kindly remembrance of friends in Australia. I was delighted to see that not only were you present as President, but the oldest of my Sheb-

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO SIR SAMUEL WAY

bear friends—Mr. John Thorne, whose work, like my own, must now be drawing to a close.”

“July 29th, 1908.

“I think I must tell the story of my own breakdown. I was far from well when I left home; the journey made matters worse, and the second day of Conference (Wednesday, the 17th ult.) was very wet. I got damp during the dinner hour and sat in the damp clothes during the afternoon. As a result I had to leave Sheffield in haste on Friday morning to get medical aid. After two days' rest I returned to my school duties, and held on—though in severe pain every day—till the 16th, our Speech Day. On that day it rained pitilessly from early morning till late at night, so that it was almost impossible to avoid getting damp. Since then I have not been in school. For a week or more the matter looked very serious indeed; but just as we were fearing that a difficult surgical operation would be necessary I began to amend, and the improvement has since been daily and decisive. The boys leave to-morrow morning, and there will be seven weeks' rest before me; so I have ground to hope that by the time they reassemble I shall have regained my ordinary vigour and strength. I know you will excuse the egotism of this long description; but I thought you would like to know the exact truth.

“The Rev. H. Smith, our Connexional Editor, asked me to write a short life of yourself for publication in our monthly Magazine. I felt a little diffident about the matter, but he was very anxious that I should undertake the task. There was no time to consult your own wishes, so I

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO SIR SAMUEL WAY

promised to do my best and the MS. is now in the hands of the Editor. It will appear in the 'United Methodist Magazine' for September. I am afraid it is sadly inadequate, but I claim that it is, to the best of my belief, just and true.

"Since my breakdown letter-writing has been very painful to me. . . . You will therefore, I am sure, excuse me if I break off soon, and also if the letters are halting and broken-backed. I should like to add two things. First, how deeply grateful we all feel for the kindly remembrance of friends in Australia; and secondly, that the present class of pupils is exceptionally satisfactory in every way, and the brotherliness and esprit-de-corps of the Old Boys never before so marked as at present."

"March 22nd, 1909.

"Remembering the thousand and one things that make demands on your time and energies, I have always hesitated to write unless I had something to communicate which I believed would be personally interesting. To-day I am afraid the rule will be violated. What I have to say will be mostly of myself. You will, however, I am sure, pardon the egotism that is begotten of affliction.

"Since our last prize-day I have been on the sick-list. During the term that began in September and ended at Christmas I took no part in the work at the school. During part of the time I suffered acute pain, and could get very little rest at night. I consulted Mr. Henry Fenwick, the first specialist in England (probably in Europe), and he strongly dissuaded me from a surgical operation, but held out very faint hopes

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO SIR SAMUEL WAY

of recovery. However he said I should probably get freer of pain and regain sufficient strength to do part of my accustomed work. 'This has happened. At present I suffer little pain unless I catch cold, my appetite and sleeping are much better, and I am able to put in three or four hours' teaching daily at school, except when prevented by the severity of the weather. Unfortunately we have had a very bitter March. On the second of the month snow fell, and from that date till the 19th no day passed without a fall of snow, sometimes very slight, sometimes heavy. Such weather is the worst possible for one suffering from my ailment. There has come a change at last. The wind has veered from the North or East (where it remained nearly six weeks) to the South-West, and the air now is Spring-like though we are having heavy rains. When the sun shines out I shall be able to take the easy walking exercise that the doctor told me would be of greater worth than medicine or the surgeon's knife.

"In January we sent in two boys for the London Matriculation Exam. (making four in one year), and though the percentage of failures was very high, both passed. These are now studying for the Inter. B.A., and one of them for an open Classical Scholarship at Guy's Hospital. The highest form is as promising a one as I have ever known at Shebbear.

"The annual dinner at the Holborn this year was a great success. There were 62 present, among them Mr. Lark, Mr. Rowe, and Mr. Eliot. Illness made it impossible for me to attend, but I am told that I was not forgotten and that our old pupils remember their old teacher, not with

fear and trembling, but with affection and gratitude. This is one great compensation for an ill-paid and often poorly-esteemed profession.

"Many of the old pupils are doing honour to their old school. Mr. Sidney Russ is conducting a series of experiments on radium and the kindred elements that will command the attention of scientists in every land. He is the demonstrator in Physics at Victoria University, Manchester, and should he be spared will carve his name deeply on the annals of Science. To give you some idea of his work I send you his latest contribution—an examination of the diffusion of Actinium and Thorium emanations. An elder brother of his (Charlie Russ) has given up a promising medical practice to devote himself to Germ and Microbe research. It is with some pride that I add that the Russes (eight of them in all) are among the most loyal and devoted pupils that I have had.

"You have, of course, heard before now of the death of Mr. I. B. Vanstone, one of the oldest and most respected of the old B.C. ministers. Since the death of Mr. Bourne I believe that John Dymond has been the best-beloved of the brotherhood, and I. B. Vanstone the most widely trusted. He was pre-eminently a sane, safe man. Probably you knew the two Miss Balkwills of Shebbear village, sisters of our old minister. Both have passed away to the quiet land. So also has Mrs. Dymond (John Dymond's wife), Robert Dymond, his brother, and, only last week, James Coles (aged 88). The wife of John Batten, of Holsworthy, has also passed away, after an illness of only two days.

"As a circuit Shebbear is doing splendidly.

LETTER TO SIR R. T. WHITE-THOMSON

Mr. Jabez Honey has proved a peace-maker and excellent organiser, and nearly every society has improved since he became the pastor.

"My sincere regards to Lady Way, whom it is my misfortune never to have seen.

TO COLONEL SIR R. T. WHITE-THOMSON.

"October 13th, 1905.

"I would like you to know how delighted our friends, both boys and visitors, were to meet you on Prize-Day. Not since the last visit of our late esteemed friend Sir Thomas Acland have I heard the thing mentioned so often, or with such uniform satisfaction. You mentioned in your speech that you had given Sir S. J. Way an introduction to Mr. Barrett Wendell and that through him Sir Samuel had met the late O. W. Holmes. You also kindly gave my old pupil and friend, the Rev. H. W. Horwill, M.A., an introduction to Mr. Wendell and they are now close friends. It happened that only two days before our Prize-Day Horwill had sent me a copy of Mr. Wendell's Lectures delivered at Trinity, Cambridge, on 'The Temper of the 17th Century in English Literature.' I have read these lectures twice through with the deepest interest, and am delighted with them. I am especially pleased with his treatment of the Puritans, whose excellences and whose defects are treated with equal justice and discrimination. His estimate of Milton is exceptionally interesting, and forms a delightful contrast to the glittering exaggerations and balanced rhetoric of Macaulay. One feels one would have liked to listen to these lectures."



Rev. John Thorne, of Adelaide, South Australia.

XIII.

**MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS
TO THE
REV. JOHN THORNE.**

“August 27th, 1878.

“**I** AM greatly afraid from what I hear that Conference has not sent you the supply of men you require. Somehow or other there seems to be a reluctance on the part of young men to go to Australia. Some are afraid of the journey, others of the climate; some again of the difficulty, real or fancied, of your annual examinations; but the greater number, after all, from pure ‘cabbiness’—the fear of leaving home, say ‘No.’ Mr. Bourne’s stay I am informed will not be long, and his visit will not take place till ’80. Mr. Higman, I believe, sent you papers with the account of our opening celebration. Lord Portsmouth has been exceedingly hearty throughout. He again offers a £5 prize for English Composition. Subject, this time, ‘The Effects, Political and Social, of the Reform Bill of 1832.’ (His Lordship of course named the subject.)

“I have petitioned the Council of the Royal Agricultural Society to allow our scholars to compete for the Society’s prizes and scholarships, and to recognise the school as one where the holders of these scholarships may pass their time during the period over which the scholarships extend. The Society offers eight annual prizes of £20 each to juniors, and three scholarships of £25, £20, and £15 to seniors. The holders of these prizes have to spend the year following each award with a practical farmer approved by the Society, or at some school or college approved by the Council.

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

"What sort of place is Interior Australia? Not the 'arid, treeless desert' of the geography books, I dare say, any more than S. Central Africa was the sandy waste of the old maps."

"March 16th, 1878.

"You will be pleased to hear that a revival, such as has not been witnessed here for many years, is in progress amongst us. Many have professed conversion; and the old friends have been awakened to unwonted zeal and energy. The good feature of this awakening is that it has not been confined by any means to young people.

"I take a Bible Class every Sunday at Prospect. Last Sunday I called at the Chapel, where once a fortnight we have substituted a class meeting—instead of preaching service in the afternoon—and nearly or quite 40 persons were at class.

"On Sunday evening Mr. Braund administered the Sacrament after service. Fully 60 persons partook of the elements. You may judge from this of the extent of the recent revival.

"I cannot make out about the sending of missionaries to your Colony. Mr. Labdon was talked of long enough to have got there. As the opening in South Australia seems to be the most promising of the foreign fields I should think the executive here will do all they can to meet its requirements."

"July 19th, 1882.

"The six boys from Australia are all here safe. It is yet too early to express any opinion respecting their ability or prospects, but I will do so as soon as possible.

"The following is a correct list of the successes

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

of pupils during the year ending June 16th, 1882.

"At the first B.A. Exam. of London University of 1881 H. W. Horwill was placed in the First Class. He subsequently sat at the 'Honours' Exam. in Latin and French. In Latin he was placed second in the First Class, in French third in the Second Class.

"In December last W. M. Hocking (son of our minister, W. J. Hocking) passed in the First Class Honours Division of the Cambridge Local Exam. Senior, 'satisfying the Examiners' in Preliminary Subjects, Latin, Pure Mathematics, and Applied Mathematics, and obtaining the 'mark of distinction' in religious knowledge, and the English Language. He also won the first local prize, as being the first pupil in the large and important Plymouth centre.

"In the Spring we sent up one pupil, Samuel Pollard (son of one of our ministers), to compete for the Civil Service appointments. About 350 candidates sat, and Pollard was placed seventh in order of merit. At the next competition in May we sent one pupil (Alfred Tonkin, late of Victoria, Australia). He was placed sixteenth in order of merit among a yet larger number of competitors.

"In June we sent two pupils to compete for clerkships in the Excise. About 1,500 competitors sat for 120 vacancies. Our two pupils were placed respectively forty-fifth and ninety-ninth in order of merit (both getting situations).

"In June Horwill sat at the Oxford Local Exam., Senior, taking besides Preliminary Subjects, Religious Knowledge, English Language, Latin, Greek, French, Pure Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, and Theoretical Music. The result

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

is not yet published, but I expect him to be nearly or quite the first pupil in all England.

[He was placed third on the list, and won the Dyke Exhibition of £60 a year for four years.]

“Among these successes we have to record but one failure at London Matriculation. I shall enquire of the Registrar the subjects in which he failed, and we will devote especial attention to them. His failure really lies here—*he is too easily satisfied with himself*: his own standard is not sufficiently high. I am doing all I can to correct this very important error.”

“June 25th, 1883.

“You have probably seen in the Magazine that during a short stay I made in London last Christmas we inaugurated there a club for all the ex-pupils in or near London who are desirous of joining it. We have lately been sending up several fellows for the Civil Service, and the thought occurred to me that we ought to take some steps (1) To keep them free from the many gaudy temptations of London; (2) To save them if possible to the Denomination. I had often thought over this matter and mentioned it to several pupils. At last some of them determined it should take a tangible form. A Club was formed, and more than 30 ex-pupils, with about 20 other friends, attended, at the Council Chamber of Exeter Hall, the opening dinner. They elected me president. At my suggestion the Club was then and there named the ‘James Thorne’ Club. I sincerely hope that your father, who in his life time, I know, failed to make much impression on my own heart and character, will

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

in this way prove a living power among the future pupils of the College. You will be pleased to learn in connection with this matter that during the last eight or nine months a wide revival has spread among the pupils, mainly owing to the wide-felt spiritual influence of Alf. Tonkin, Mr. Tonkin's younger son. Fully 50 pupils attended the Tuesday Evening Class meeting, if we take the average during the entire five months from the January return of pupils to the break-up on the 14th of June. I need not say that this is quite unprecedented. Two things have been very remarkable in this movement: (1) The almost entire absence of noisy excitement among the pupils; (2) The entire absence of 'reaction' on the part of those who do not sympathise with the movement."

"April 23rd, 1884.

"At Edgehill (the new Ladies' College) they are likely to pay their way clear the second term. This, I consider, is a really splendid success. Mr. W. J. Harris (now M.P. for Poole) writes me: 'I am happy to hear of the success of Edgehill. I hope it will rival but never surpass Shebbear.' I got a spontaneous and most kind letter from Sir Thomas Acland a few months since, asking of our affairs."

"April 23rd, 1888.

"Sufficient time has elapsed since the arrival of the last Australian for us to form something like an accurate idea of his character and abilities. I believe him to be in every way an excellent young man. His piety is, I believe, sincere and earnest, his information is creditable to himself, and he seems resolved to spare no pains to

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

make his residence amongst us a success. Altogether, I am exceedingly pleased with his accession to our numbers ; and can only hope that you will send us more such.

“You have long been complaining—and I know that it is not without abundant cause—of the coldness of our young ministers in refusing to come out to your help. I have sometimes thought that if I were not nearly fifty, and handicapped with a long family, I would offer myself for the work. But we are likely to make ample amends. At our recent Committee Meeting (at Exeter) Mr. Bourne announced his intention of joining your ranks, and of spending his closing years in Australia. It will be a terrible loss to us. Never, never before were his strong faith and strong arm more needed here. There are those, who have won in one way or another a strong hold on many of our people, who cannot be trusted, and whose headiness and indiscretions may at any hour land us in inextricable mischief. And there are those whose flabbiness offers a painful contrast to the stable Christianity of men like your late father and like Mr. Bourne himself. I cannot bear to think of the Conference without Mr. Bourne's presence among us—he is the living representative of all that is noblest and best in our denominational life. I think Mr. Bourne's sermon at our Annual Conference (the Missionary Sermon) at Swansea was the very noblest I ever heard in my life. I hesitate between that sermon and one I heard Dean Stanley deliver some years ago at Christmas.

“My own mother is *dying*—slowly, imperceptibly, but certainly dying. For forty years she worked hard and lived hard to bring up a long

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

family better than she had been brought up; and in the same spirit in which she had faced the difficulties of life she now faces the approach of death—smilingly, unflinchingly. I have been with her during the short vacation which ends to-morrow.

“I often think of you in your far-off home, and I always persuade myself that there is yet a greater work for you to do than any you have yet achieved.”

“December 17th, 1891.

“You will hear in the Magazine from Mr. Bourne's pen of most of our doings in America. I found out, to my surprise and vexation, that the *race* prejudice is as bitter as ever in the Southern States; and that the *ladies* are far more responsible than the men for keeping all this alive. Some of the Episcopal Methodist ministers expressed an earnest hope that the bitterness would come to a speedy end; but their wives, many of them at least, neither hope nor wish for any such consummation.

“You have heard before now of the death of poor Sam Thorne. That terrible ride of his, on horseback, two days under a burning sun, with typho-malarial fever strong upon him, must have been a time of frightful suffering. Our doctor, who has been to Egypt and Arabia, and understands these malarial fevers well, said, ‘The torture must have been unutterable.’ For some time before his death Sam had a presentiment he should not return. Yet he kept at his work—never so earnest as when he was taken away. A true martyr!

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

"Before you get this Way College will be in working. We all join in the heartiest wishes for its immediate and permanent prosperity ; and we feel sure it will succeed as it deserves to succeed. My own confidence in Mr. Torr is complete."

"May 25th, 1891.

"Till Chief Justice Way was actually on his voyage to England I cherished the hope that you would accompany him. I would give a very great deal to be able to see you and your sisters once more ; and I sincerely hope that you will soon have the opportunity of visiting Shebbear again. We are in the midst of considerable extensions again that will cost upwards of £1,000 (including furniture). This will complete the Quadrangle,—and will not only be a great advantage in many ways—supplying baths that are sadly needed, fresh classrooms, and further sleeping room,—but will also protect the schoolroom from the bitter North-West winds.

"The temptation of nearly all your colonial men is to skim lightly over twenty different subjects without doing much at any. That was Q's failing. He would be constantly beginning new work. Then he would go at it with wonderful zeal for a week or two. The re-action came ; and he soon found out (or thought he found out) some new field promising better success, or for which he felt himself better qualified. The actually successful students are those who like young Jack Orchard run with the dogged perseverance of a beagle—not so swift as a greyhound, but untired from morning till night, and from January to December."

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

"August 21st, 1894.

"I venture to think that there is not a single member of the late Conference who does not cherish the hope of seeing you amongst us, should he and you be spared another year.

"I feel sure that the celebration of your father's centenary will be such as he would now approve.

"It will be a recognition on our part of a deep debt owing to him who has passed away; and a pledge that we will carry on the work which he did so much to initiate in the same spirit of loyalty to high heaven and faith in the possibilities of man. I feel quite sure that the Australian Conference will readily consent to your absence on such a mission; and am persuaded that the celebration which we anticipate will act as a great stimulus to our people both at home and abroad."

"July 3rd, 1895.

"We are all very glad to hear that you are safely landed in 'Old' England again, after your very long voyage. We indulge the hope that the tossings and disquiet of a long sea-journey have not proved too great a strain for Miss Thorne's strength.

"We shall be delighted to see you next week. Kindly drop a line to Mr. Spencer to let him know the day, and the train which he must meet. I am glad you are staying at Mrs. Marrow's, as she is an old friend; and I have every reason to know that not one of the survivors of the old 'Sutcombe Town' family has forgotten, or is likely to forget, what he owes to your family.

"We are expecting a Conference of unusual

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

interest. There is the talk of union with the Primitive Methodists.

"Sam Pollard is home—home in good form and good spirits—and will have something to say of China. There is your father's centenary celebration,—and last, not least, there is very probably to be a General Election just in the midst of the Conference."

"April 29th, 1897.

"The Chief Justice has landed and we have—Mr. Spencer and myself—both written to him about the Prize-Day. We do not know yet on what date we shall fix.

"We are looking forward to two other visitors of more than ordinary interest: Frank Dymond (with wife and child) from China, expected in about 10 days, and Ready. Ready has certainly succeeded wonderfully in New Zealand; but to my mind there is a far deeper interest in the visit of Frank Dymond. Frank was a fellow in whom the social element was very highly developed, and I strongly feared—and told him so—that the utter loneliness of China would unhinge his mind. At one time it seemed only too probable that I should be right; but he fought through the terrible ordeal, and on one occasion held the fort *alone* in China for above two months. As Mrs. Samuel Thorne said to me, 'Not one of us has ever had to fight such a battle as Frank Dymond fought; and although it nearly killed him he conquered at last.' "

"September 8th, 1897.

"Mr. Geo. Thorne, of London, has furnished me with some further details of your ancestors.

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

"In 1606 the will of Michael Thorne of the parish of Warkleigh (5 miles S.W. of Southmolton) was proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. The will bears date April 14th, and was proved July 9th of the same year. This Michael Thorne's wife was named 'Ebbott,' a rare and suggestive name. They had children, 'Humphreye,' 'Anthonye,' 'Johane,' (sic), 'Thomasine,' and 'Elizabeth.' 'Anthonye' married Dorothy Rudd, of Ashreigny, the marriage license bearing date December 19th, 1617. Mr. Thorne suggests that probably this 'Anthonye' Thorne was grandfather of your grandfather John Thorne of Shebbear. As, however, John Thorne was born in (or about) A.D. 1762, is it not more probable that he was the great grandfather? The secret lies buried somewhere in the parish registers of Ashreigny and Warkleigh. I had quite intended after Conference to go to Ashreigny and search the books there. But circumstances prevented me, and I am not sorry now; for I should not have searched the records of Warkleigh, of which I had not heard, and therefore at best my work would have been but half done."

"April 18th, 1899.

"Permit me to congratulate you most sincerely on your election, for the second time, to the presidential chair in Adelaide. I am glad that the ministers and representatives of the Connexion in the Colony did themselves the honour to place you at their head. Yours is a unique distinction—once President of the English Conference, twice President of the South Australian Conference. I am unable myself to join in the chorus of wel-

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

come that is sung to the proposed Union. It is now late in life for one to be making new friends, and this lopping off of the Colonies is like the loss of an old friend—or of old friends. In former years we had Canada, and Australia, and New Zealand where we could send our young candidates,—where they received a hearty welcome, and where they often achieved a better and more lasting success than if they had remained in the 'Old Country.' Now all this is already a thing of the past. We shall have no more Lakes, and Raymonds, and Tillers and the rest, as links between North Devon and the Antipodes. Other schools boast that ex-pupils fought in the Khyber Pass or in South Africa. It has been our boast that we have sent the servants of the Prince of Peace to proclaim His advent and reign in China, in the Australian Colonies, New Zealand, United States, and elsewhere. This can only be true in the future to a much smaller degree than in the past. However, I dare say if the fellows are earnest, honest workers, they will find a day's work to do somewhere or other. Have you heard from D. lately? I got a letter from him months ago dated from Cairo. He was then on his return from Omdurman, and told me he meant to volunteer for Cyprus. Since then, however, I have heard nothing of him."

"March 1st, 1900.

"I see from the Magazine and from the newspapers, both English and Australian, that 'Methodist Union' is an accomplished fact in South Australia. Well, it is no use fighting against the inevitable, and all that remains is to make the best of the altered conditions of things.

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

It seems rather hard, however, that one by one our colonial missions have dropped out of our hands. At first our Missionary Society was simply a *home* Mission; then it became a home and colonial Mission; then a home, colonial and foreign Mission; and now very soon it will be only a home and foreign Mission. This makes the smallness of our body look even smaller; and it is not entirely a question of appearance either. We constantly suffer through the ambition of our young men and young women to belong to a 'larger and more influential branch of the Christian Church.' "

"February 7th, 1901.

"I was delighted to receive your card on Monday, and to see again—albeit I had to use a hand-glass to do so—your face, looking although much besnowed, as cheery and inspiring as of old. I wish I could see it in the flesh, and hear your voice,—singing or talking I should not care. Possibly this may yet happen, either by my crossing over to you, or by your coming to us.

"I need not tell you that for the last fortnight little has been thought of or talked about here except the death and burial of the Queen. Even the Boer War has been forgotten for the time. The scenes in London were, I suppose, almost or altogether unprecedented. Here at Shebbear we held a memorial service at the Chapel on Saturday at 1.30 p.m., which was very well attended. The boys sang Goss's beautiful anthem, 'If we believe,' and three or four other hymns, including the Queen's favourite, 'Great God, what do I see and hear?' (Tune, Luther). Mr. Lark and Mr. Smeeth read the several passages from the

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

Scriptures and prayed, and I gave a short address on the lessons of the Queen's life. The preceding Sunday I preached at Torrington, and in the evening preached a memorial sermon. The Chapel was as beautifully and tastefully draped as I ever saw either church or chapel in my life. After the morning service the 'Dead March' in 'Saul' was played, and after the memorial service Chopin's Funeral March.

"It seems abrupt and almost irreverent to pass over at once from such matters to the common affairs of school-life. But our human lives are mingled in like manner with sacred and commonplace, tragedy and comedy. School nearly full—not quite so many as last term (four less), but the difference is trifling. Mr. Lark is doing very well as Governor, and Mrs. Lark is certainly very kind and thoughtful.

"The gymnasium is a splendid addition to the premises. I forward you by this post two of our new prospectuses, giving a few photos of College and classrooms.

"My own family is dispersing as steadily and surely as it gathered here. I am afraid I shall have to lose Lily at Conference. This will be the most serious blow I have known since the death of my poor wife in 1892.

"But old Robin Kellaway told us once that 'he never went to Dartmoor to meet trouble coming from Plymouth,' and the old man was right.

"You must excuse all this talk about myself and the school—I really had nothing else to talk of that you could follow at such a distance.

"By the way, the record of the dead lately is a remarkable one—numbering (apart from the

supreme loss) Sullivan, Haweis, Dr. Hopkins, all close one upon the other—with Creighton, Bishop of London, and a host of inferior men. It is rumoured that Punch's 'Pretty Jane' (Jayne of Chester) is to succeed Creighton; but there has been no official announcement.

"How is Federation working? Is this a species of absorption or a real Federation, likely to work and wear well?

"I was going to say all send their kind love, but outside my own family the number is growing ever fewer and fewer that link the living present with the past which can never wholly die."

"August 27th, 1902.

"Another of our Annual Conferences has come and gone, and I am sure you have many times thought of old times and of present-day doings amongst us. Very probably you have already heard—through Mr. Bourne or some other friend—of Forest Hill Conference, but even in that case the impressions of one who was practically an outsider may be of interest. We were all of us pleased with the interest taken in our work by Christians of other denominations. They lent their aid ungrudgingly, and did their work splendidly.

"The public services were not, of course, so numerously attended as at Holsworthy or Plymouth, nor were they marked by the same enthusiasm. Nevertheless, they were very satisfactory—much better than most of us anticipated.

"The sermon to the Conference by Robertson Nicoll was able and masterly.

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

"Last year the candidates did splendid work. They sat for an exam. in Butler and Eager held by the Christian Evidence Society, and you see the result from the enclosed.

"September 15th, 1903.

"Conference has come and gone ; but I only know of its doings by report. A brother was visiting me, whom I had not seen for a quarter of a century or more, so I only stayed at Newport two days—just long enough to attend to my duties as a member of the Examination Committee, and then hastened to Shebbear again. I am told it was a peaceful, successful gathering, and that the missionary services were especially good. One or two of the resolutions passed were however, I fancy, ill-advised—especially one directing the Governors of the Colleges not to pay their rates, as a protest against the Education Act of last year. I utterly disapprove of the Act and meant to refuse payment of the rate and allow my goods to be sold, but should have done so in my private capacity and not as master of the school. I think, under the circumstances, I shall pay the rate. As a school we have boasted our perfect freedom from ecclesiastical bias ; and it is a curious example of the irony of history that in the very year that our Conference ordered the Governors of the Colleges to offer a passive resistance to an Act, which, rightly or wrongly, they conceive to be unfairly drawn up to help the Church, the son of a gentleman, only recently passed away, and who in his day was strongly opposed to dissent, is to distribute our prizes.

"You have heard of the death of Mr. Vaughan.

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

For 25 years he was the truest of friends—always cheerful, considerate, resourceful—thinking of everyone's happiness and welfare before his own. The Allin family are fast passing away. I told you of the death of Richard Allin, of Thuboro' (formerly of the Mill) and his sister Anne; now Elizabeth Furse (Mrs. Daniel Allin's sister) is gone. She was a woman who never talked much of kindness, but who was as true as steel, and who would defend one as fearlessly behind his back as she would reprove him before his face if he deserved reproof. She was always a deeply-attached friend of my poor wife. Lastly, Mrs. Allin, of 'Town,' is lying on the bed from which I fear she will have to be brought down. She had a very slight paralytic stroke; but her strength seems to be passing away, and she is almost certainly sinking. I do not apologise for these details, I know your deep interest in the old families."

"February 17th, 1904.

"I was very sorry to learn—on receipt of memorial card—that your sister Mary has passed away. One by one the old familiar faces pass away to be no more seen,

"I can say as you do—I have no reason to complain of the tyranny of past years—but, of course I cannot run a mile in five minutes as I used to do in the sixties and seventies."

"September 26th, 1904.

"Since the receipt of yours Conference has come and has passed, and Prize-Day has passed too. We were blessed with splendid weather on Thursday last, quite a treat for us, for

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

we have had bad weather three or four years successively, and very bad weather at least twice. The attendance was very good, and the whole function a distinct success. Mr. Turner, of Bristol, distributed the prizes, and his quiet aristocratic air and bearing gave tone to the affair. He was delighted with what he saw, and henceforth we may count on him as a friend ready to help in any way we may need. I shall send you a brief statement of the year's work. I may add that seven young men sat for the Exam. held by the Christian Evidence Society in Butler's Analogy and Eager: Butler and Modern Thought (advanced grade). Of these one took the first prize, another was bracketed for the second prize, and a third took the fourth prize; three passed in the Honours section, and the fourth passed in the First Class. So that Shebbear secured three out of the four prizes, and had no Second Class and no failure.

"Of Conference work I know very little. I went to St. Austell to take my place on the Examination Committee and stayed till after the election of the President and then left. Old Robin Kellaway's hopes have been wonderfully realised in his grandson. He can do what no other man in the denomination can do. The other night they had a meeting at Eastleigh (Southampton) in support of the new chapel. It was agreed that the friends had done well, and not much more could be reasonably expected of them. But B. told them that they ought to do much more—they could raise £100 more before the end of the meeting if they were minded. He told Q. to pull out his note-book and take down promises; and sure enough before the end of the meeting £101 had

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

been promised ! It is a kind of work I would not do if I could ; but more certainly it is one I couldn't do, however much I would."

"January 10th, 1905.

"A letter from you is always not only welcome but inspiring. So one bond of union between Great Britain and the Colonies is Guy Fawkes ! In this connection I always think of Charles Lamb. I cannot recollect the exact words—but he wished to see 'the much-maligned gentleman, standing with his powder, his quick-light and matches, ready the next moment to be blown to the skies.'

"Well, Christmas has come and gone and already notices have been sent to pupils' parents of day of return. Then the strap will be clapped on effectively for another 12 weeks. Every term I fear that the prosperity of many years will be followed by a 'slump.' But we have reason to be thankful that the slump has not yet come. Already we have engaged enough new pupils to fill up all losses, and new enquiries are made nearly daily. We have very peaceful times. Our six assistant masters have been with us now more than two years without a single change of any sort. That is, I think, a thing without precedent. Jack Orchard is rising rapidly in the Civil Service. He is now in Darlington, auditor for County of Durham."

"June 26th, 1905.

"I was very pleased indeed to see your handwriting on the envelope a day or two since. It is like a breath of the air on Salisbury Plain ; it brings back old associations, old follies of course,

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

blunders innumerable,—and yet there seems life and life-giving inspiration with it. You remember I was born under Salisbury Plain, and it is home to me, just as the district between the Severn mouth and Dartmoor is home to you. For three days we have had fairly tropical weather here—the thermometer in the Science Room (put where the sun never shines on it), ranging at anywhere between 80 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit. (That is, of course, between noon and 3 p.m.) A sudden fall of the mercury, with a cloudless sky, and an uncanny stillness of the air, portends a storm. A few days ago and any farmer you met would have said, ‘Almost a failure in grass crop,—corn very poor.’ There had been a drought of nearly a month. A week ago (or ten days) the rain came. Everything is changed. Grass will be heavy. Corn promises well. On Thursday last we had our Sports’ Day. Mr. Brown (of Buckland Filleigh) gave us a beautiful silver bowl—quite equal to the ‘Public Schools’ Cup, competed for by the great public schools. On the stand is a number of silver shields, and the name of the best all-round athlete is to be inscribed on one every year.”

“November 2nd, 1905.

“Thank you very much for the copy of the hymns sung at Mr. Bourne’s funeral service. Is your sermon to be published? If so, I should greatly value a copy of it. At the funeral itself I could not help thinking of the irony of Fate. Here was Mr. Bourne, laid to rest in Shebbear Chapel yard, beside the ashes of your father, mother, brothers, and more distant relatives; and

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

you who knew him longer and more intimately than any other living man, 12,000 miles away. It is, however, some little compensation that you are better able from that distance to make a just estimate of the man's work and worth, and some consolation that you knew what was doing at the time, a thing which a few years ago could not have happened without a miracle.

"I have been struck with one thing since Mr. Bourne passed away. In the many references to him that I have seen and heard, several of the noblest traits of his character, and the finest achievements of his life, have been passed by untouched, or only hinted at; while stress has been laid on things in which, in my own judgment, he was not very happy or successful. Take him, however, for all in all, he was the noblest man I have ever known, with the single exception of your own father.

"March 21st, 1906.

"E—— T—— is a curious fellow. He says that if his Uncle James could return to life and see the Bible Christians of to-day, he would be sorry he 'ever invented them.' The head and front of their offending is, I believe, that nearly all of them believe in the 'heresy of teetotalism.' Further, nearly all of them are Liberals and Free Traders, all which are deadly sins. It would be a startling surprise to hear your father condemning these things. E—— is a clever fellow, after all. Among other things he is an excellent chess-player, and he has taught my son a useful lesson by giving him a sound drubbing. He was beginning to think himself a little chess-king.

"I have heard from D. He has an appoint-

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

men in the Woods and Forests Service, and has written to me to send him the best books on Botany, Forestry, and Mensuration. I have ordered them to be sent at once (sending the best books in use at Cooper's Hill).

"November 7th, 1906.

"Poor old John Adams—'Clarionet John'—has passed away, a type of a class fast disappearing, a farmer who with wife and family worked harder than a slave, but who contrived to save money enough to give a really hopeful start to every one of a long family, sons and daughters. His funeral was attended by a very great crowd.

"You will have seen the educational report in the papers I sent you. O. N. Brown, who was too young to matriculate at London in June, sat and passed in September (18 days above the minimum age), and immediately after competed for one of the open scholarships at Westminster Hospital (there was one £60 a year and two £40). Brown won one of the £40 scholarships. As he was years younger than the average competitor this was a very good stroke. Our educational outlook was never better in our history than at this moment."

"April 11th, 1907.

"I was very much shocked to hear the sad news from Queensland. On Monday morning I received a newspaper from Brisbane with a marked notice that Mr. [William] Thorne had passed the crisis and his recovery, though probably slow would, it was hoped, be sure. So it seems he has been on the very outskirts of the path that we shall all tread in no great time.

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

"You spoke of the discredit brought on your name by one erratic member of the family. I can assure you that the fair fame of the race is not likely to be long or seriously eclipsed. I was in Exeter on Monday and a gentleman came to see me and to make inquiries about Shebbear. He spoke enthusiastically about your father, and said that his own father was a follower and admirer of James Thorne. I was much struck by his earnestness and evident sincerity. And this is an experience very like a dozen others at different times and in different places. In quite similar tones Sir C. T. Acland spoke of your father at Edgehill last Prize-Day, calling him Bishop Thorne. A few days ago the boys gave a highly-creditable sacred concert in the Chapel. The place was packed, and the pieces were capitally rendered ('God so loved the world,' Stainer; 'Sweet and low,' Barnby; 'The Homeland,' Sullivan.) Mr. Hands gave us three or four excellent renderings on the organ; and Miss Webber, L.R.A.M., of Torrington, three beautiful pieces on the violin. She was called upon at the last minute to take the place of an exceedingly promising pupil—R. Colmer—who was expected to play on the 'cello. Colmer was ill.

"One of our most successful institutions now is our 'Debating Society,' which meets every Friday evening at 6.30, and continues till 8. The debates are bright and often exceedingly interesting."

"June 22nd, 1907.

"Yesterday we laid in the grave at Boasley Chapel-yard the mortal remains of a very old friend of us both—William Higman. He was

taken seriously ill just a week before, on Friday, the 14th, and died on Tuesday the 18th. The attack had all the appearance of paralysis, as he lost the power of speech, save in a very broken way ; but it was probably the last stage of an illness from which he had suffered for years. You know, of course, that for years he was almost totally blind—cataract of both eyes, the surgeons not encouraging the risk of an operation. But it was pitiful to see him feeling his way about with his hand, and not infrequently knocking himself, like blind Amyas Lee, against an open door, or the corner of a wall. But he bore his affliction splendidly and to the very last seemed cheerful. In this case, however, the noblest feature was the devoted self sacrifice of his three daughters. I very much doubt whether any man is justified in allowing another, whether wife or child—to sacrifice himself or herself for his sake ; but in this case it brought out a patient love and endurance to which I have never known a parallel. I don't know what the future of these girls is to be, but I am sure they deserve whatever is best in life and home.

“The funeral was conducted by the President, J. B. Stedeford, in a way entirely worthy of himself. Higman lies beside his devoted wife, in that bleak chapel-yard, 900 feet above the sea-level, swept by the wild West winds. But he sleeps well at last. There is not much more of interest to relate. The school is full,—fuller than at any previous period of Mr. Lark's governorship. In the early part of the week we had three Government inspectors here—one for literature, one for mathematics and science, and one for art. They made a most searching

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

examination of every part of the school's work,—far more searching than the examination held four years ago. Their report is not yet published, of course, and will not be for some months. Three of the boys sat for the London Matric. last week. Result not yet known. One sat and passed in January; another sits in September, and two or three others next January. Fifty boys sit for the College of Preceptors' exam. next week; and two for Oxford Local Senior in three weeks' time. So you see that the whole school [except the very lowest form, and new entries at Christmas or Easter] is sitting for outside tests. Edgehill is doing well. The premises are now the very noblest in England (i.e., for girls' education) West of Cheltenham,—for there is nothing equal to Edgehill in Bristol."

"February 11th, 1908.

"Very possibly you have already heard that Mrs. Braund has passed away. She died of bronchitis and double pneumonia after less than a week's illness. She took to her bed on Wednesday week, and died a week ago to-day. She was, as I dare say you know, the sister of one of our ministers (now deceased), a Miss Oates, of Hicks Mill. As a wife I believe she came as near perfection as our poor humanity can do. The most honest and outspoken of women, entirely fearless, entirely just, she was yet one of the kindest souls I ever knew, helping her husband in his public labours and private duties, and doing a great deal besides herself. She did not indeed engage in *public* work—all the better for that,—she would not even pray in public; but many

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

a home is the happier, many a life the nobler, and many a record the purer, through her kindness and sympathy. Three friends—and such friends—at such short intervals between—Higman, Perryman, and now Mrs. Braund. I was asked to say a few words at the funeral of them all; and was requested by the family (and it was the wish of Mrs. Braund herself) to preach her funeral sermon. I did so on Sunday at Holsworthy, to a crowded audience, who evidently deeply sympathised with her husband.

“Mr. Perryman's and Mrs. Braund's funerals were among the most impressive I have ever attended. The crowd at Mr. Perryman's funeral was greater even than that at Shebbear when Mr. Bourne was buried. It was the public recognition of a noble and unselfish life.”

“November 17th, 1908.

“I was delighted to receive your kindly greeting on entering my seventieth year. As one gets older he makes few new friends, but he learns to value his old ones more highly; and a voice from across the wide seas—a kindly, well-remembered voice—becomes more and more inspiring.

“The last year has been for me one of considerable pain and weakness. For a few weeks I suffered acutely, but as I have lived sixty-nine years with little physical suffering it would be cowardly to shrink now from my share in the common lot. I have consulted the first specialist in London (probably in the world) in the class of ailments from which I am suffering, and he said emphatically, ‘I believe you will live longer, live happier, that is freer from pain, and freer

from risk, without an operation, than with it.' He gave me a few hints as to mode of living, etc., but his medicines were hope and idleness. The last-named would not come amiss I think in many cases, but really to one who has been busy for many consecutive years it is not the easiest to take. However, I am trying to follow up the prescription. This is the more easily done because I have a thoroughly trustworthy and able staff of assistants, who are prepared to do any extra work to meet the emergency.

"The old Shebbear Circuit is doing well lately. The minister works very hard, and has been very successful in making matters work smoothly. The new premises at Lake, the new chapels at Rowden and Langtree, and, above all, the excellent manse—one of the best in the United Methodist Church—are signs of activity and life; and in most cases the financial question has been manfully and successfully grappled with.

"By the way, Honey is developing the powers I always knew were in him. He has been in constant attendance at Committees and at the House on the Docks (London Docks) Bill—about which he probably knows as much as any man living. He is certain of promotion in the Service.

"My own children are well, and, so far as I can judge, are fighting life's battle manfully (or womanfully)—'playing the game,' as Charlie Bray would put it.

"The Education muddle continues and will continue till the State recognises the fact that to fashion good citizens is its business, and that religion must be left to the home and the Churches."

"February 22nd, 1908.

"I was delighted to see your handwriting on Saturday when your letter reached me, and to learn from it that old age, in your case, is not accompanied by physical suffering. I think Miss Thorne's case is very remarkable. One would have supposed that removal in middle life to a much hotter climate would have hastened the period of weakness and decay, but so far from that being the case it is probable that she is at least as well as she would have been had she resided in Devonshire till now. We have been having three weeks of cold, dry, trying East winds. For agricultural purposes the weather is ideal. Those who do not thoroughly prepare their lands this year ought to be driven off the land and bound to seek other employment. But to those who are not so strong as they were once, and to those who have coughs and bronchitis, which is nearly half the population, East winds are far from pleasant. In my own case I am almost afraid to put my nose out of doors for fear of pleurisy or inflammation. At the very beginning of the cold spell I took a severe cold, which has developed into a very trying cough, and which makes other matters harder to bear. It is better now; and I feel sure that if warmer weather comes on and I am able to saunter round the garden I shall be better. That will supply the 'fresh air and light exercise' that Mr. Harry Fenwick said would be better for me than medicine or surgical interference.

"This term I am doing more at the school. I try to put in three hours per day, except on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and then one and a half hours.

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

"The meeting of the Old Boys at the Holborn Restaurant this year was the most successful they have held. There were sixty-two present, and their optimism and enthusiasm were very remarkable.

"Have you heard of the splendid work that Sidney Russ is doing at University College, Manchester? He is conducting a series of experiments on radium that will be heard of in all lands, and will rank with the first investigations of our day. I have four of his printed papers. Not only in Chemical Physics, but in Mathematics, they soar quite out of my reach. Bendle has been appointed Ophthalmic Inspector for the schools (all kinds) in Somersetshire. He is living in Bath, and is highly gratified with his appointment. But if I were to go on to enumerate all the old boys who are fighting life's battle nobly and well I should send you a small volume, not a letter.

"I am sorry, but not much surprised, to hear what you say of the tastes of the people in S. Australia. Here, too, congregations look askance on gray hairs. Before he passed away, it required a wonderful deal of advertising and exhortation to get together a chapel full of people to hear Mr. Bourne; but a young fellow of twenty or twenty-two, if of fairly imposing presence, and full of self-assertion and bounce, could fill any chapel in the circuit with a quarter of the trouble. I have listened to such men bawling aloud the commonest platitudes, or even the most impudent mis-statements, with as much complacency as if they had enquired at the oracles of God.

"The last I heard of Mr. I. B. Vanstone (a week ago) was that he was very ill indeed—in fact,

dangerously ill. Kelly, who used to be in Australia, has passed away

"Walter Daniel, of Backway, who in the last three or four years had become increasingly useful at the Chapel, one of the superintendents of the Sunday School, and a very generous giver, is also gone. Of course, he was afflicted for many years and walked with a crutch, but he was one of the most cheerful of men. When he was a boy at Shebbear he was the picture of health and a very intelligent boy. A severe chill brought on his affliction, and gave him, thirty-five years ago, one whole year of intense suffering. When I was married first I used to pass Backway morning and evening, and often heard the moaning.

"One old link of the past still survives—Jimmy Bate—and the Old Boys remembered him again and sent him 35s. It was gratitude to the man who, as Charlie Bray said, shied more boots at their heads than he cleaned.

"My family are all well and doing well."

Several of Mr. Ruddle's letters to Mr. Thorne have been quoted previously. A passage from the Annual Report for 1910 issued by the Australian Old Boys' Association may fittingly conclude this volume :

"Truly did our honoured President describe Mr. Ruddle as one of the master builders of the Bible Christian Denomination; moreover, many a strong and good man outside that communion acknowledges that much of the inspiration for his life's work was derived from the same source.

"It may well be that our old head master might have gained more of what men call suc-

MR. RUDDLE'S LETTERS TO REV. JOHN THORNE

cess in some other sphere of work; but he never failed to acknowledge that, mainly through contact with James Thorne, he gained at Shebbear what was far more precious than earthly success or glory. We see in this the love and wisdom of God, and with reverent gratitude we thank Him for what He made of 'Thomas Ruddle, and that He gave him to Shebbear and to us.'

THE FARRINGDON LIBRARY

Edited by REV. HENRY SMITH.

PRICE 1s. EACH NET.

OTHER VOLUMES OF THIS SERIES:

Tight Corners in China.

:: By REV. SAM POLLARD, ::
Missionary among the Miao in South-West
China, and an old Shebbear Boy. :: ::
:: 168 pp. Profusely Illustrated. ::

Ministering Women:

The Story of the Work of the Sisters
connected with the United Methodist
Deaconess Institute, together with some
account of the Origin and History of
the Institute.

:: By REV. HENRY SMITH. ::
:: With 14 full-page Illustrations. ::

May be ordered from

THE UNITED METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE,
12 Farringdon Avenue, London, E.C.;
or any Bookseller.

LT
788
R83
D95

**THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Santa Barbara**

**THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE
STAMPED BELOW.**

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 001 081 263 4

